

THUS SPAKE
BHAGAWAAN GOPINATH JI



"AMAR CHHAA MARAAN"

Does the Immortal (Soul) Die ?

Publication of :-
Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji Trust
Pamposh Enclave, GK-I, New Delhi-110048 (India)



Thus Spake Bhagawaanji :

"Amar Chha Maraan"?
Does the Immortal (Soul) die ?

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First Edition : Delhi, 2016
Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust
GK-I, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi 110048 (India)

Printed in India:
By Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust
(i) Typeset & Layout by Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust
(ii) Printed at : Thomson Press India Ltd.

Published by : Mr. Satish Razdan, Secretary,
Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust
GK-I, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi - 110048 (India)

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Foreword

It is a matter of immense satisfaction that through the dedicated efforts of all concerned - as the contributors and the team of workers involved in compiling / editing the material available - we have been able to bring out this volume titled *Amar Chha Maran* based on the nectarine words uttered by Bhagawaanji as such. In a befitting way, it throws light on what the Bhagawaan said immediately before attaining his *Mahasamadhi.* In the context of his eminence as a 'Saint of all time' and his vital link what constitutes our great spiritual heritage, it needs to be mentioned that the present project was taken up in hand in response to the persistent requests for such a publication from our large family of devotees in order to preserve the rich Indian heritage of sainthood.

We are pleased to place this volume in the hands of our readers across the globe. We acknowledge our special gratitude to Sh. M.K. Tikoo, being the senior-most member of the Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust, who remained deeply and quietly involved in working untiringly to ensure that the volume in question is placed in the hands of our readers at the earliest. All concerned involved in bringing out this volume deserve the Bhagawaan's blessings in equal measure.

We would also like to express our gratitude to esteemed T. N. Dhar 'Kundan' for having permitted the Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust to incorporate his write-up on the topic 'Amar Cha Maran' published in the volume titled '*Gospel of Bhagawaanji*' (Pages 44-48).

We are also grateful to Prof. A. N. Dhar, Prof. M. L. Kaul, Sh. Ashok Razdan and Sh. Sohan Krishen Khordi for the valuable help they have provided us in compiling and editing this volume.

Let us hope that with the grace of Bhagawaanji, we will not only maintain the tempo of our programmes and publications but build on it further in the years to come.

Jai Kishori Patwari

A Supplementary Note

The nectarine words 'Amar Chha Maran' were heard spoken by Bhagawaan Gopinathji before he attained his *Mahasamadhi* in the year 1968, when he was surrounded by his devotees (including his kith and kin). The expression sounds a truism–the immortal doesn't die; that is what it literally means and conveys unequivocally. One doesn't immediately wake up to its deep and wide implications. However, as we just ponder over its connotations and significance, we immediately perceive that it says much more than we can comprehend. Loaded with meaning and pregnant with serious thought, it encapsulates "infinite riches in a little room." The thoughtful among us, who are capable of independent thinking and are deeply read, as well as conversant with our scriptures, immediately see it as a profound statement of the spiritual truth known to our Saivite and Vedantic luminaries. The task of being well equipped with what can be said knowledgeably and convincingly on the subject is obviously a challenging one. In order to collect written material that is relevant to the topic of our interest and that should be fresh, original and stimulating, Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust chose to write to a galaxy of scholars and intellectuals, who are fully aware of the Indian classics, requesting them to contribute their learned papers and articles. The response has been very generous and rewarding. Many write-ups have been received–rich in scholarship and originality of thought, presenting variety, and also comprehensive in coverage.

We are highly indebted and grateful to the writers who have painstakingly come up with learned articles that they have contributed to the making of the volume 'Amar Chha Maran', being brought out by us for both scholars and earnest readers across the globe. We sincerely believe that, keeping in view the richness and readability of the write-ups, this valued work will be found highly useful, possibly even indispensable, by readers in general.

We are glad to place the volume, properly compiled and published now, in the hands of our readers, spread over the Indian subcontinent and countries abroad.

It is befitting that the lofty message of Jagadguru Bhagawaan Gopinathji will be further disseminated throughout the world in the interest of international peace and well-being.

- A.N. Dhar

Mortal Immortal

– T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'

The other day I was reading an article on Bhagawaan Gopinathji. I came across a pithy remark made by him in the form of a question: "*Amar chha maran* Does the immortal ever die?" I stopped reading, to ponder over this remark. What does this remark mean? Is it not obvious that what is immortal cannot die? Then what was the great saint trying to convey? It occurred to me that one does not need an extraordinary wisdom or an above-average prudence to understand that only mortals meet with death and not the immortals. One does, however, need knowledge, wisdom and understanding to figure out what is mortal and what is immortal. We have to sift grain from the chaff. The Bhagavadgita is full of assertions about the immortality of the soul in almost every chapter. *Na Jayate mriyate va kadachit, nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah. Ajo nityah shashvato-ayam purano, na hanyate hanyamane sharire:* "The soul is neither born nor does it die. It does not come into being and does not cease to be. It is unborn, eternal, constant and ancient. It does not get killed when the body gets slain." B.G. II.20. The indestructibility of the soul has been brought out very lucidly in this shloka. *Na-enam chhindanti shastrani na-enam dahati pavakah. Na cha-enam kledayanti-aapah na shoshayati marutah:* "Weapons do not cleave the soul, fire does not burn it, water does not wet it nor does wind dry it." B.G. II.23. I wondered whether it was the immortal soul that Bhagawaan Gopinathji was referring to while making this remark. What about the other elements, the body, the mind and the intellect, which together with the soul constitute a being, the *jiva* (individual embodied soul)? The great Lal Ded has proclaimed, *Asi aesya tai asi aasav, asi dore kaer patavath. Shivas sori na zyon to marun ravas sori na atagath.* "Only we there were in the past, only we there will be in the future: It is we who have been in this cycle of coming and going from time immemorial. The Divine in us, the Shiva, will never cease to be in this cycle of birth and death just as the Sun will never cease to rise and

set." Was it this "we" of Lal Ded that the Bhagawaan Gopinathji had in mind when he said that the immortal does not die? Did he mean to convey that we all are immortal? In order to figure this out we must try to understand what is meant by this "we" or "I", the *jiva*, and whether this *jiva* is immortal. What, after all, is the *Jiva* or the embodied soul? It comprises the *sthoola sharira* or the gross body, the *sookshma sharira* or the subtle body and the *karana deha* or the causal body. While the gross body comprises flesh and blood, the subtle comprises breath, mind and intellect. The causal body is primitive ignorance, devoid of consciousness. This body gets destroyed when the knowledge of the real self dawns. The question that arises is whether the *jiva* is immortal in its totality or only partially in one or more of its aspects. *Jiva* is said to be consciousness defined by the principles constituting individuality. It is the embodied being limited to the psychophysical states. Doership and enjoyership are inseparable from the consciousness of duality. *Jiva* is eternal since its individuality is never destroyed in the births and deaths it undergoes. It is non-eternal, as it is transfigured in the realization of Brahman. When its limiting conditions are withdrawn, the Jeeva turns back to its source. The embodied soul is made up of five different sheaths. These are the physical or *annamaya kosha,* the vital or *pranamaya kosha,* the mental or *manomaya kosha,* the intellectual or *jnanamaya kosha* and the blissful or *anandamaya Kosha*. Again, the question that runs through the mind is whether one or more of these sheaths are immortal or these are collectively immortal in their totality. To identify the immortal we have to understand the nature of *jiva.* It is apparent that *jiva*, the being, *jagat,* the world and *Ishwara*, the Divine, go together and, therefore, we need to know their relationship, *per se.* If the relationship of creation and the creator is one of separate entities then their properties can be different. If, however, their relationship is that of manifestation and the one manifested, then their properties can be identical or the same.

Our intellect fails to fathom this complicated riddle because our

approach is through reasoning and logic. Swami Krishnananda has observed that "logic is a proud child of dualist prejudice." If God alone is this entire world nobody can comprehend the relationship between Him and the world. It is only a *siddha purusha*, an emancipated soul like Bhagawaan Gopinathji, who can perceive the reality and proclaim with authority that He is immortal, His manifestation is immortal and that there is nothing like death for no one dies. Science also believes that matter is indestructible. It can change its form but can neither be created nor destroyed. Even our ordinary observation shows us that everything here verily is cyclic – without a beginning and without an end. Observe the seasons: the spring, the summer, the rains, the autumn, the winter and again the spring. See the time cycle: the dawn, the morning, the noon, the evening, the dusk, the night and again the daybreak. Look at the nature: the seed, the sprout, the sapling, the tree and its branches, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits and once again the seed. Behold the waters, the rains, the melting snow, the brooks and rivulets, the rivers and tributaries, seas and oceans, the vapours and clouds and back to rains. The life is also exactly the same; the conception, the birth, the childhood and adolescence, the youth and old age, decay and death and then again the conception and birth. The Gita says, *Dehino-asmin-yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara, tatha dehantara – praptih, dhiras - tatra na muhyati:* "The soul in this body experiences childhood, youth and old age. Likewise it crosses over to the other body and this does not delude a serene person." B.G.II.14. Where, then is the beginning and where is the end?

Bhagawaan Gopinathji is perhaps trying to tell us that we are all immortal and, therefore should not fear death. The Vedas have also given a clarion call to us, *Amritasya putrah:* "O Ye, Children of the immortality." We have to recognize the immortal in us. After all, the Lord has said, *Ishwarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-deshe tishthati.* The Divine dwells in the hearts of all beings." B.G. XVIII.61. According to Swami Shivananda, the self of every one bears testimony to the

existence of the self, which comprehends the entire universe. The Universal self is God. Though one is encased in this finite body, one can think and feel. 'I am infinite'. This infinite in us is Truth, Ethics and Aesthetics or 'Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram.' It is Being, Consciousness and Bliss or *Sat, Chit and Ananda.* One might ask why then can't we perceive and recognize our immortality. This query can be answered in two ways. First, the *jiva* or the individual soul has all the faculties of the Brahman, the universal soul. It can create, sustain, destroy, conceal and favour (*srishti, sthiti, samhara, pidana and anugraha*). It has all the three powers of knowledge, desire and action (*jnana, ichha, and kriya shakti*). But all these faculties in his case are circumscribed by limitations of time, space and quantum. The same faculties and powers in the Divine are unlimited. It is these limitations that limit our vision. We are able to see a being from his birth to his death only and thereby conclude that we are mortals. The Gita has explained, *Avyakta-adini bhutani vyakta-madhyani Bharata, Avyakta-nidhanani-eva tatra ka pari-devana:* "O Bharata, all beings are unmanifested in the origin, manifested in their middle state and unmanifested in their end. Where then is the cause for anguish?" B.G. II.28. We as common men fail to see beyond our gross body of flesh and blood. We think that the visible mass is the be all and end all of every thing. The source of our knowledge is only *pratyaksha* or the direct perception. Therefore, we are unable to see beyond the gross body. If we take recourse to other sources of knowledge, i.e. reason, analogy, scriptural testimony and intuition, we will be able to see our existence in its totality, perceive our true self and then realize the significance of the remark made by Bhagawaan Gopinathji. His was a realized soul wherein the limited 'I' and the limitless 'I' had got merged. No wonder, therefore, he was seeing clearly the immortality of every being, universality and indestructibility of the soul and omnipresence and eternality of the Divine. Even a modern western philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, in his famous work, 'Logic' brings the universe within a single fold of perfection as a wholeness, which

cannot brook any interference from outside. According to him, the Absolute has no outside for everything is inside it. Every thesis has an antithesis and the two get blended in a synthesis, which is a higher phase of reality in which the lower contradiction is overcome and transcended. Everything in the universe, says Hegel, is incomplete and insufficient, and yet is the phase of Reality. Everything is to be included and nothing to be excluded, or rejected. The Absolute is the grand culmination of every process, physical, psychological and spiritual.

There is evidence galore in the scriptures that establishes oneness of *jiva* and *Brahman* (the Absolute, the Supreme Reality). It has been clarified at places that even though the *Brahman* pervades this universe yet it transcends it. The Veda says, *Tat tvam asi:* "That art Thou". *Aham Brahma-asmi:* "I am the Divine." *Ekam-eva-advitiyam:* "There is only one who is unique." In other words, it denotes merger and oneness of the subject and the object. The Purusha Sukta says, *Purusha-eva-idam sarvam...ati tishthat dashangulam:* "Everything here is God who stays higher by ten measures." Isha Vasya Upanishad states, *Ishavasyam - idam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat*: "All this that is seen in this world is pervaded by the Divine." The Shaiva Acharyas of Kashmir have said, *Vishvatmikam tat-uttirnam:* "The Divine is manifested as the universe but stays above it". Sufis also have repeatedly proclaimed, *Anal-Haq:* "I am the Supreme Truth". According to Huston Smith, Hinduism considers the world multiple, that includes galaxies horizontally, tiers vertically and cycles temporally. The cycles that he has referred to indicate our belief in biginningless and endless nature and thereby immortality. Salvation, which is the aim of every seeker, is thought of in terms of the relationship of the soul to the Absolute Reality of God. In the Sankhya school the soul is released and returns to a state of pure consciousness of self. *Purusha* or eternal self is emancipated from *Prakriti* or non-self. When the soul realizes its true distinction it is no longer bounded by the world of nature and the

emancipated soul is eternally freed from rebirth. Salvation is the soul realizing its own immortality. In the Advaita or the school of non-dualism the emancipated soul is identified with the Ultimate Reality, Brahman. The soul enters into mystical union with Brahman. The consciousness of the empirical self is completely transcended. The soul realizes its true knowledge as metaphysically one with Brahman, the Divine. A Christian monk of the 5th century, Dionysius the Areopagite, has this to record: "Then beyond all distinction between knower and known, the aspirant becomes merged in the nameless formless Reality, wholly absorbed in That which is beyond all things and in nothing else..... Having stilled his intellect and mind, he is united by his highest faculty with That, which is beyond all knowing." Ralph Waldo Emerson has stated the same thing in a different way. He says, "The rapture of prayer and ecstasy of devotion lose all being in one Being." All this requires intense personal experience through the medium of spiritual exercise. Even the Sufis of the Middle East believed that the rational arguments are required to be buttressed by intuitive and subjective experience. The first Christian monks, who lived like hermits in the barren Egyptian desert, adopted the meditative techniques of the East. They repeated their prayer, "Kyrie Eleison" silently until it became as spontaneous and instinctive as breathing. The prayer seeks mercy on the sinner. About the meditation of the Jews he says that as he repeats the name, he directs his attention upwards from 'Yesod", the limited ordinary mind, into 'Tiferet', an awareness beyond ego. That means he directs his thoughts away from all forms of this world, focusing on the name. If his efforts meet with God's grace, the self will suddenly rise up beyond 'Tiferet' to an ecstatic state called "Daat", or Knowledge. Here his sense of separation from God dissolves. The end of the aspirant's path is "Devekut", a state in which his soul cleaves to God. When his consciousness stabilizes at this level he becomes a "Saddik" or saint. The qualities of a "Saddik" include equanimity, indifference to praise or blame and a sense of being alone with God.

The sum and substance of all these express statements is that the *jiva* and the *brahman* are one. We have to start our spiritual journey from the position of the *jiva* and attain the goal at the level of the Brahman. On the way we experience various states, which justify different philosophical concepts. In the end we come to the position where the limited 'I', the *jiva* gets dissolved in the unlimited 'I', the Brahman. At this point we perceive the immortality and the eternity and come to believe that nothing dies. Although in the limited sense we die frequently, in the real sense of totality we never die. Take the case of any act–say a journey to a specific place. There are three elements in this act, the traveller, the journey and the destination. As soon as the traveller reaches the place, the journey ends and the traveller ceases to be a traveller or in other words he dies. Thus, in the context of any situation circumscribed by place and time anything can be seen as mortal. But if we perceive the situation in its intrinsic significance we shall realize that nothing dies for in the given example the traveller, the journey and the destination, all the three get merged. To have this attitude we have to raise ourselves to Divinity. Bhagawaan Gopinathji saw everything as immortal for he himself is immortal. Let us all bow in reverence to his immortality.

If we look around we will observe innumerable things, animate and inanimate. Every such thing observed by us has two aspects, its essence and its form. Essence is the subtle substance that is not visible but is manifest in many ways and can be discerned by the observers. Form is the outer appearance that attracts the first glance of the observer. It is a matter of common knowledge that the form is changeable and, therefore, mortal. Take the case of a human being, he undergoes various stages of a baby, a child, an adolescent, a teenager, a youth, an old person and finally a decayed skeleton like structure. Same is the case of a bird and an animal. All these have similar stages of childhood and adulthood. Finally, death comes and destroys their outer form. In the case of the vegetable world a seed sprouts forth and grows into a sapling. In due course of time it becomes a full-fledged

tree. It gives shade to a traveller. It yields fruits and is clothed with shining green leaves, glittering blossom and colourful flowers. Eventually it decays and is used as firewood. Many trees are cut and their timber is used for making and fabricating various items of furniture, joinery and other things. Here again the form undergoes change and also destruction in the long run but the seed remains that goes through the same cycle once again. This cycle is never-ending but again the seed will remain as indestructible essence.

Essence of us human beings is our soul, which is immortal. It adopts and assumes various forms at different times and that form is mutable and subject to destruction. It has rightly been said by an English poet, "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul." An important statement made by the Bhagavadgita is that the essence knows the form. So it calls the form as *kshetra* or the field and the essence as *kshetrajna* or the knower of the field. It says while the field is perishable the knower is imperishable. Form is appearance and thus important so far as our relationship with outer world is concerned. Yet it is also true that it is the essence that controls and governs, directs and steers. This essence is immortal and immutable; the form is changeable but imperishable in its essence. Another important feature about this essence called soul is that it is neither destroyable by itself nor can destroy any other thing. That which is born only meets with an end, *jatasya dhruvo mrityuh.* That which is not born *per se*, cannot die. So this essence of ours, this soul is imperishable. Again I might repeat that it is the form, the outer appearance that perishes but not the inner essence, the substance. Take the case of our body. Even this is not perishable. The appearance it has from time to time undergoes changes but the intrinsic essence remains. It is said that this body is made up of five elements and when a person dies the five elements mix with the larger mass of these elements. Earth goes to earth, water to water, air to air, fire to fire and ether to ether. That being so, where is the question of body getting perished. Earth, water, air, fire and the ether, all are immortal. These

have been there from time immemorial and shall exist for ever in future as well.

The question, therefore, arises: what is it that is mortal? The answer is the outer frame, the appearance. The appearance is mutable and hence mortal in its individual form. The essence remains but the form goes on changing. Some thinkers are of the opinion that everything has two aspects. Either it is or it is not, either it exists or it does not exist, and either it is born or it is not born. In case it is born it must die. The Gita says, *Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh, dhruvam janm mritasya cha:* "What is born must die and what dies must take birth again." The essence or the substance of anything is not born and hence does not die. The outer form or the appearance takes a shape or is born and hence must die in that form. As for the two aspects of existence and non-existence of a thing, it does not sound convincing. After all, what does not exist cannot be conceived and cannot be thought about. We have a clear authority in the Bhagavadgita, *Naasato vidyate bhavah, naabhavah vidyate satah :* "What is non-existent cannot be conceived and what cannot be conceived cannot exist." There is another way of looking at this question of mortality and immortality. Ishavasya Upanishad says, *Ishavasyam-idam-sarvam:* "Everything here verily is pervaded by the Divine." We know that the Divine is immortal, unborn, imperishable and immutable. The creation is his manifestation. So the entire creation is immortal whereas its various forms are subject to change.

The essence of the entire creation that Bhagawaan Gopinathji has underscored by declaring that death does not come to the immortal. Sri Gita says, *Dehino-asmin yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara, tatha dehantaras praptir dheeras tatra na muhyate:* "Just as the soul in the body adopts childhood, youth and old age in different stages, it leaves one body and enters a different one as yet another step." It implies thereby that there is no death, no perishing and no mortality. Once we understand this gospel of Bhagawaanji, we will be in a frame of mind where nothing grieves us and nothing

makes us sad. In fact, it will enable us to adopt a balanced attitude in all situations of the pair of opposites, loss and gain, defeat and victory, grief and joy and the like. This situation is stated to be the state of yoga, *Samatvam yoga uchyate:* "The balanced attitude is all that is about yoga".

OM TAT SAT

"Amar [Atma] Chha Maraan?"

Does the Immortal [Soul] Die?

– H.L. Ganjoo

"Amar [atma] chha maran? (Does the immortal [soul] die?)", said Bhagawaan Gopinathji rhetorically to one of his devotees. As we know, a rhetorical question is asked only to make a statement or to produce an effect rather than to get an answer. What Bhagawaanji wanted to affirm emphatically and authoritatively was that Atma *is* immortal. It is only the body that dies. He knew it beyond a shadow of doubt. On what authority did he say so? One might say that it was on the authority of *the Bhagvadgita*, which he regarded as his guru; but most probably, it was on the authority of his personal spiritual experience (*anubhav*), his actual self-realization. He had practically verified what Lord Krishna says to Arjuna in Chapter II of the *Gita*. Scriptures are unnecessary for the man who has attained spiritual insight. He who attains the wisdom of the Supreme passes beyond the range of the Vedas and the Upanishads, *sabdabrahmativartate*. "When thy intelligence shall cross the turbidity of delusion, then shall thou become indifferent to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard." (the *Bhagvadgita*, II, 52, translated by Dr. Radhakrishnan.)

Even long after Bhagawaanji's physical body was consigned to the flames, he practically demonstrated his immortality in many critical situations. Many of his devotees have had visions of him in his distinctly recognizable ante-mortem form. Many soldiers of the Indian Army reportedly saw him actually guiding them on the battle-front during the Indo-Pakistan War in Kargil and elsewhere. Many of his devotees say that even now, whenever they are in distress or in desperate need, they intuitively feel his presence bringing them succour and relief. During *pooja* sessions he makes his presence felt in the divinely charged ambience.

What do we mean by 'Atma'? It means 'soul' or 'spirit' or 'self'. It is the living essence of a person which exists even beyond the body and mind. "In most religious traditions, there exists some concept of a

soul or spirit in human beings, which is distinct from the physical body and has religious importance. The soul is invisible to ordinary eyes, though words for it in several languages associate it with the breath [*prana* or vital air or life]. Being non-physical, it is commonly believed to survive the death of the body. In Hinduism it is in essence divine as the *atman* or divine within." (*The Encyclopedia of World Religions,* edited by Ellwood and Alles).

In the *Bhagvadgita*, II, 11-30, Lord Krishna brings out the distinction between Self and Body and advises Arjuna not to grieve for what is imperishable. Here are some of the verses translated into English by Dr. Radhakrishnan:

"Never was there a time when I was not, nor thou, nor these lords of men, nor will there ever be a time hereafter when we shall cease to be." (12). Dr. Radhakrishnan comments : "Souls are like Brahman, for the cause and effect are essentially one, as the sayings, 'I am Brahman' [*Aham brahmasmi]* 'That art Thou' [*tat tvam asi*] indicate".

"As the soul passes in this body through childhood, youth and age, even so is its taking on of another body. The sage is not perplexed by this." (13).

"He is never born, nor does he die at any time... He is unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." (20).

"Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn out bodies and takes on others that are new." (22).

"Weapons do not cleave this self, fire does not burn him, waters do not make him wet; nor does the wind make him dry." (23).

"He is uncleavable. He cannot be burnt. He can be neither wetted nor dried. He is eternal, all-pervading, unchanging and immovable. He is the same for ever." (24).

Let us now consider what Sri Ramakrishna says about Jiva (the individual self) and Brahman (the Universal Self) :

"If a piece of timber be thrown across the flowing Ganges, one side of water will appear to be separated from the other. In the same way, the idea of Ego makes the soul seem distinct from the Supreme Self. Really, there is no division between them."

"When bound in fetters, the soul is the Jiva; when released from them, the same thing is Shiva."

"As the water and its bubbles are one–for the bubble has its birth in water, floats on water, and is ultimately dissolved into water–so the Jivatman and the Parmatman are in essence one and the same. The difference is that while one is finite, the other is infinite; while one is dependent, the other is independent."

"The Jivataman resides in the heart of man like iron, and the Parmatman in the head like a magnet. Evil tendencies keep the iron of Jivatman covered, as with clay. If this clay of evil tendencies be washed away by the continued pouring of tears of Bhakti, immediately the Parmatman magnet attracts the Jivatman-iron."

"The union of the Jivatman (individual soul) and the Parmatman (Supreme Soul) is like the union of the hour - and the minute-hands at twelve o'clock."

Ramana Maharishi, also known as Sri Ramana or Bhagawaan Ramana, has shown us the path of Self-knowledge. As a schoolboy of sixteen or seventeen, named Venkataraman, he had a sudden and unique experience, which he described much later to Paul Brunton, the author of *A Search in Secret India*. On a certain day, while the boy was quite healthy, a sudden violent fear of death overtook him. He just felt he was going to die. It did not occur to him to consult a doctor or his elders or friends. He had to solve the problem himself, there and then. The shock of the fear of death drove his mind inwards. 'Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' He dramatized the occurrence of death, imitating a corpse. "Well, then," he said to himself, "this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body, am I dead? Is the body I? It is silent and

inert, but I feel the full force of my personality, and even the voice of the 'I' within me, apart from it. So I am Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means that I am the deathless Spirit." All this flashed through him vividly as living truth which he perceived directly. The 'I' is the only real thing about oneself. From that moment onwards the 'I' or Self focussed attention on itself by a powerful fascination. "Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading or anything else, I was still centered on 'I'. The fear of death had vanished for ever in the realization that the 'I' was one with the universal deathless Self which is the Spirit and the Self of every man." The 'I' in him was itself consciously the Spirit.

The well-known Greek aphorism "know thyself" is akin to the Upanishad precept *atmanam viddhi*, know the self. Lalleshwari says that if a man is wise, he should know himself, and that way he knows the Lord. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," says Lord Jesus Christ.

A Kashmiri seer (believably Swami Krishna Joo Razdan) says :

"Amar paano, bhram samsaar chhuy,
Aadi deev bananuk cheiy aadhikar chhuy
Haarav rostayi bhava-sara taar chuy,
Sat Vechaar, sat Vechaar."

"O Immortal self, the world [of appearance] is delusive.
You have the right to become the prime god.
You can cross the ocean of life without money;
Meditate on Being/Truth; meditate on Being/Truth".

He addresses himself as the Immortal Self.

William Wordsworth, the English poet of Nature par excellence, titled his famous Ode "Intimations of Immortality." In the poem, he says :

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar,
Not in entire forgetfulness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

Addressing a child, "a six years' darling of a pigmy size," he says:

"Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, –
Mighty prophet! seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master over a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height;
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?"

(*Ode : Intimations of Immortality,* II. 108-125)

This poem tells us that the child is much nearer the vision of the self. As Dr. Radhakrishnan says in his Foreword to Arthur Osborne's book *Ramana Maharishi*, "We must become as little children before we can enter into the realm of truth. This is why we are required to put aside the sophistication of the learned. The need for being born again is insisted on. It is said that the wisdom of babes is greater than that of scholars."

Wordsworth had spiritual experiences right from his childhood. "Nothing," the poet tells us, "was more difficult for me in childhood

than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being... . With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immortal nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality." And again : "There was a time in my life when I had to push against something that resisted, to be sure that there was anything outside of me. I was sure of my own mind; everything else fell away and vanished into thought." In the poem, Wordsworth says that he raises "the song of thanks and praise" for

"those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a thing surprised."

The poet is thankful for

"...those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence : truths that wake,
To perish never,
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor boy,
Not all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!"

Wordsworth describes one of his spiritual, *samadhi*-like, experiences in his poem "On Revisiting the Wye Above Tintern

Abbey." To him this experience was

"... another gift
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened; - that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, -
Until the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul;
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

Thus, on the basis of the scriptural texts and the seers' direct perception of the spirit within, we can say that man's essential nature is spiritual. It is our sense of identification with the body that causes our ignorance (*avidya or agyan*) and the delusions of our mortality, helplessness, pain and suffering. It is only through spiritual insight, or direct spiritual perception, that we realize our divinity and immortality.

Related to the idea of Immortality is the notion of Reincarnation. "Most religions hold that there exists an afterlife. The way in which this afterlife is pictured varies greatly among the world's religions. Some envision a shadowy other world or one similar to this one; some see eternal reward or punishment in heaven or hell; some believe in reincarnation (or coming back to be born again) in human or animal form; some envision ultimate absorption into God or eternal reality... Hinduism emphasizes reincarnation based on *Karma*, or cause and effect; for every thought, word, and deed there is a consequence. One can be reincarnated as an animal, human, or in a heavenly or hellish

state that will last until the good or bad *karma* is exhausted. The ultimate ideal is to become one with God, and so go beyond death and rebirth altogether."

(The *Encyclopedia of World Religions*)

Dr. Annie Besant, in her book, *The Necessity for Reincarnation,* says : "Like a seed, a germ, the germinal spirit comes forth into the world of matter, with all divine possibilities hidden within it; in that germinal spirit are all divine powers that man may become perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect; but in order that perfection may be attained, there must be growth, experience, evolution; in each life on earth experience must be gathered; in the long interval between death and rebirth the experience gathered on the earth is woven in the invisible worlds into the fabric of the soul."

Let us now consider what Jalauddin Rumi says :

"I died a mineral and became a plant.
I died a plant and rose an animal.
I died an animal and I was man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar
With the blessed angels; but even from angelhood
I must pass on. All except God perishes.
When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become that which no mind ever conceived.
O, let me not exist! for Non-Existence proclaims,
'To Him we shall return.'

This is a quotation form *The Perennial Philosophy*, by Aldous Huxley, implying evolution through various states of existence. Huxley remarks : "There is a general agreement, East and West, that life in a body provides uniquely good opportunities for achieving salvation or deliverance."

In one of her quatrains, Lalleshwari says :

"Now I saw the hearth ablaze,

Now I saw not fire nor smoke;
Now I saw the Pandava Mother,
Now she was but a potter's aunt."

Isn't this *vaakh* suggestive of a series of lifetimes in a long process of reincarnation?

About the early 1960's, the University of Rajasthan set up a Department of Parapsychology. Dr. Bhattacharya of this Department was assigned to carry out research, both intensive and extensive, on the subject of Reincarnation. After several years of assiduous work in various countries, he came to the conclusion that reincarnation is an established fact. He gave vivid and detailed descriptions of many cases, including the very interesting one of a Turkish boy named Rehman, which would convince a person that there is reincarnation of souls throughout the world.

Swami Abhedanand, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, has written a book titled *Life Beyond Death*, in which he has discussed the subjects of immortality and reincarnation in detail. It is a critical study of spiritualism which confirms the existence and immortality of Atma.

A number of great thinkers in the west have accepted the idea of reincarnation and written about it. We are told that Schopenhauer thoroughly believed in it, and so did Emerson, Walt Whitman, Goethe, Bruno, Plotinus, Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates. The books on the subject are too numerous to mention. Even today, there are many highly qualified people engaged in intensive research in parapsychology. Some of them are connected with the ESP Research Associates Foundation. (ESP stands for Extrasensory Perception). Mr Harold Sherman was its Founder and President. He has authored many books, including *You Live After Death* and *the Dead Are Alive.* We are told that we can attain a belief in immortality beyond contradiction or dispute. What we want, however, is not a belief in immortality, but a direct, practical, personal *experience* of our immortality. Each one of us must verify and confirm it through direct

spiritual perception. Bhagawaanji confirmed it himself; that is why he was able to say authoritatively', "*Amar chha maran*?" As he was a self-realized *sadguru*, who considered truthfulness (*pazar*) to be an essential qualification for the realization of one's divinity or immortality, his words, as Rabindranath Tagore might say, flowed straight from the depths of truth. How can we doubt their validity?

May God lift the veil of ignorance (*avidya maya*) from our eyes in order to make us realize that we *are* immortal!

Asato ma satgamaya; tamaso ma jyotir gamaya,
mrityor ma amritam gamaya.
"Lead me from the unreal to the real;
Lead me from darkness to light;
Lead me from death to immortality"

Om Namo Bhagvate Gopinathaye.

"Amar Chaa Maraan"? - A Doctrinal Exposition

– Prof. M.L. Koul

In the hymn to the Guru, Prof. J.N. Sharma characterises Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji as a 'Jagadguru', or universal spiritual preceptor, who read and recited the 'Guru Gita' every day with a clock-like regularity. Like all Indian spiritualists, Bhagawaan Jee too had considered views on God, man, and the world. His deep delvings into the abstruse world of spirituality had in large measure shaped his world-episteme which he would not enunciate in the rigour of philosophy, but in a language steeped in a spiritual flavour. Dilating on Bhagawaan Ji's philosophical and spiritual views, Prof. Sharma writes: "All that exists is God-incarnate and 'Aum' is its root. Meditating on 'aum' removes the ego. Realization of God comes by discretion, hard work, the guru's guidance and surrender to him. One should act upon what the four Vedas and *shastras* lay down. Maya, the delusion, can be over-come by non-attachment. Lust should be avoided to attain spiritual bliss. One should think of Brahman as a tree and sit on any one of its branches. The goal is the same."

In his first-ever biography of Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji, Shree S.N. Fotedar says: 'His philosophy is akin to the Trika doctrine of *advait* Shaivism of Kashmir with emphasis on will and action. Its primary purpose is to explore the nature of reality through experience gained from the regular system of practice for the exploitation of thought and oneness of the individual soul with the universe, through improved materialism.'

Elaborating the theme further, Fotedar says, 'Though there are many principles common to the Vedantic and Shaiva philosophies, Shakti is special to the latter. The Shaivites believe that the universe is created, preserved and dissolved in Shiva only. In Vedanta it is Maya alone that is responsible for creating the universe, the whole of which is a delusion'.

The two epistemic quotes from the works of Prof. J.N. Sharma and Shree S.N. Fotedar, Bhagawaanji's ardent devotees,

unmistakably establish that, besides being a practitioner of yoga, he harboured a world-view that as a broad mosaic had finer weaves from Vedanta, Kashmir philosophy of non-dualism and the whole corpus of Hindu Shastra. The religio-cum-philosophical position of Bhagawaan Jee was largely expressed when he in ecstasy would vigorously exhort his throngs of devotees and crowds of seekers to deeply meditate upon the 'eternal' which is beyond death and decay. His peculiar Kashmiri coinage 'amar chaa maraan?' translated as 'does one who is immortal die?' has all the trappings of a *sutra*, aphorism, fewer in words but pregnant with an esoteric meaning. The *sutra* emphasises the eternality of a Transcendental Being which has been termed variously in philosophies of different shades. In Vedanta the transcendental being is Brahman, in Sankhya it is Purusa; in Kashmir philosophy of non-dualism, it is Shiva; in Madhyamik philosophy of Buddhism, it is Shuniya (voidism); in Vijnanvad of Buddhism, it is 'Vijnan' (consciousness).

To put Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji's views in proper context, it is relevant to say that eternality of a Transcendental Being is one of its manifold attributes and does not by any standard define the 'supra-sensible being' holistically. But when the saint would utter or declaim the aphoristic expression 'amar chaa maraan?' in presence of his throngs of devotees, his essential purpose was to impel them to delve further into the multifarious features of the external reality, though experientially known to them, but completely forgotten under the delusive layers of Maya, lexically called 'Maya Vimohini Shakti'. The expression 'amar chaa maraan?', I believe, is a *maha-vakya*, a sublime sentence, imprinted with a profound esoteric import. It borders close on the Upanishadic *maha-vakyas* like 'Thou art that' and 'I am Brahman'. What the upanishadic *maha-vakyas* do to the seekers, the *sutra* of Bhagawaan Ji does to the crowds of the learned and the lay. It is elevating and spiritual in effect and essence.

Brahman in Shankar Vedanta

Brahman as the Transcendental Being in Shankar Vedanta is

invested with a plethora of divine attributes. He is an absolutely pure being having no involvement in and commitment to the objective world. He transcends the entire cosmic process. Had he participated in the world process, he would have lost his pristine purity. Brahman is *sat* (being), *cit* (conciousness) and *anand* (bliss). In Shankar Vedanta Brahman is entirely a changeless principle and as such does not support or succour change or flux. Brahman is a non-dual entity. His non-duality would stand compromised had he caused the world or participated in the flux or transcience of the world. Brahman is the sovereign, and there is no category of thought which can equal or challenge his unique non-dual position. To explain the existence and creation of the world, Shankar has thoughtfully devised a category like Maya which is mainly characterised as *anadi* (beginningless) and *anirvachniya* (inexplicable). Maya and Ishwar together as categories of thought are devised to be responsible for the creation of the world of objects.

Brahman is the neumenon and has no sway over phenomenon, which falls within the purview of Maya. Brahman is not the agency to create or manifest the exterior world. Critics have called such a Brahman inert and deficient in activity. As Brahman is far away from the cosmic process, the world as a matter of consequence is either false or illusory. 'Vairagya' is stipulated as a means to higher ascension. As an inactive and inert Being, Brahman is lacking in the force of his will to create the world. In such a mode of thinking knowledge is directly posited against ignorance, *avidya*. When knowledge appears or dawns, ignorance cannot survive and suddenly disappears. Identification with Brahman happens through two factors of knowledge–path (Jnan Marg) and non-attachment.

Brahman is possessed of *cit* (consciousness) which essentially implies freedom. But he has no essential will to create, so he is pure consciousness. He has all other attributes that have been expounded in detail in the Upanishads as attributes of Brahman. Eternality of Brahman beyond death and decay is one of the features

that Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji focused on with a view to raising the level of spiritual consciousness of his initiated disciples and lay men in quest.

Shiva in Kashmir Philosophy of Non-Dualism

Shiva is the Transcendental Being of Kashmir Shaiva non-dualism. He is absolutely a free Being to will, know and act; that is why Kashmir thought is aptly designated as 'Svatantryavad'. Taking a divergent position from the Shankarites, the Shaiva monists have textured Shiva as 'cit' and 'anand' which on combination becomes 'chidanand'. 'Cit' is the consciousness and 'anand' is his playfulness or sportiveness. His consciousness as His luminosity pre-determines the sciring of His own consciousness. This feature of Shiva differentiates Kashmir Shaiva monism from other monistic philosophies which stipulate the Transcendental Being as *prakash* having nothing to do with divine acts of willing, knowing and doing. Besides being Transcendental (*prakash*), Shiva is immanent in His creation. He is responsible for the cosmic drama and is deeply committed to it. Shiva is a free Being and can do anything, even that which borders on impossibility He is not dependent on materials to design and build the Universe of plurality and multiplicity.

Shiva in essence is Mahesvara, Great Lord. His Lordship materializes in his free acts by way of willing, knowing and doing. He is the Lord because He participates in the complexity of cosmic process whenever He chooses to manifest that which lies in dormancy within Him. He has no compulsion to manifest. He may do it or may not do it. Shiva is the pure Being having no taints, in spite of the acts of manifesting the world. In Vedanta Brahman loses his purity if he stoops to participate in the reality of the world. As per the Kashmir Shaivites, the world is both pure and real. The concept of'Mahesvarya' resolves the dichotomy between 'nuemenon and phenomenon', eternal and transient', 'pure and impure', 'changeless and changeful'. Luminosity (*prakash*) as such is no indicator of Shiva's absolute freedom, but the assumption of the Kashmir

Shaivites that establishes Shiva as surveying his own consciousness marks His nature of absolute freedom.

In the words of Utpaldeva, "It is well known that freedom of consciousness is the very nature of the light of the subject, for otherwise, though there would be the reflection of outside objects in it, yet this light would be only like the insentient crystal." What Utpaldeva conveys is that Shiva as a self-conscious being is an unfettered Being. Had He not been absolutely free, His luminosity (*prakash*) would be like a luminous crystal that reflects images only. Freedom invariably implies variform acts of willing, knowing and doing, which are factorial to the manifestation of the objective world.

'Amar chha maraan?' as an aphorism of Bhagawaan Gopinathji, underscores the attribute of Transcendental Being transcending the temporal factors of time, space and form. Shiva beyond any form of temporality can harness limitless Shakties to will, know and act. In the words of Khemraj, 'Consciousness used in the singular indicates its non-limitation by temporal factors'. Somanand underpins the same idea when he writes about Shiva having 'unrestrained powers to will, know and act'.

The Shaiva-advait thought of Kashmir has projected its Transcendental Being as incomprehensible, indefinable and ungraspable. Besides being beyond temporality, such a being cannot be expressed through the medium of vocables. To Bhagawaan Gopinathji, a Transcendental Being was 'amar' or 'eternal', not subject to death and decay. His focus on this attribute alone never precludes many other attributes of his Transcendental Being. As Bhagawaanji was well steeped in the Trika philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, his stress on this attribute was directed at his disciples to awaken them to many other attributes for a better intuitional realization of the Absolute Reality with which he was in identity gained through the recognized methodologies prescribed in Shaiva-Yoga praxis.

Purusa in Sankhya Philosphy

Those who have a nodding acquaintance with Indian Philosophy have a vague idea that Sankhya is a philosophy of dualism stipulating Purusa and Prakriti as two separate polarities. Prakriti as beginning-less (*anadi*) and endless (*anant*) matter forms the garden-bed of the world of name and form. It has its own inherent dynamics. It is eternal, absolute, unmanifest and imperceptible. Sattava, Rajas and Tamas are its three attributes. The process of evolution gains momentum when three gunas lose their equipoise and balance. In Sankhya, Prakriti is considered 'the nurse and receptacle of change.' Prakriti is also called 'Pradhanam'. Apart from Prakriti, Sankhya has evolved another category of thought known as 'Purusa', which in essence is the self or the principle of consciousness. On evaluation, Purusa has been essentially characterized as indifferent (*udasin*) because Prakriti plays a much greater role in the dynamics of cosmic process than Purusa. The Purusa is looked upon as the ultimate reality and the world process as illusory. Kapil Muni acknowledged the doctrine of plurality of selves and was far from accepting a principle like universality of self. Sankhya holds that it is not quite necessary to postulate a principle of consciousness or intelligence to explain evolution or change. In the *Rigveda*, Purusa is raised to the exalted status of the cosmic principle from which the whole universe originates.

Considering the substance gleaned from the works of Prof. J.N. Sharma and Shri S.N. Fotedar, it will be pertinent to place the aphoristic expression of Bhagawaan Gopinath in the frame of non-dualism of Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism. As per these, Bhagawaan Gopinathji held that Self is the essence of man and the value that a man has to effortfully pursue in the world of duality is to harness his psycho-physical frame to recognize his pristine nature of Shiva. 'Amar chaa maraan?' alludes to the eternal self in man that establishes his absolute identity with Transcendental Being as Brahman or Shiva. 'Amar' is the eternal self and 'cha maraan' as its

predicate connotes the temporal factors of time, space and other limiting elements. The aphoristic expression exudes the nectar of theism, spirituality and philosophical episteme that enlivens and elevates not only his devotees (*bhaktas*) to higher planes of consciousness but also those who never had the fortune of entering the portals of his *ashram* (hermitage) at Kharyar in Srinagar and now having cropped up at many places in the swathes of our country.

Madhyamik concept of Transcendental Being

The principal exponent of *Madhyamik* philosophy is Nagarjun, who expounded the thesis of voidism (Shuniya) as its ultimate principle of reality. Shuniya is not describable through the categories of intellect. Observes Dr. Sharma: [*Shuniya*] is reality which transcends existence, non-existence, both or neither. It is neither affirmation nor negation nor both nor neither. Empirically, it means relativity which is phenomenon, absolutely it means Reality which is release from plurality'. Madhyamik in broad agreement with Mahayan position holds 'All things as non-essential and indefinable in character and void at bottom. To it, the world as such is indefinable as it is neither existent nor non-existent and the absolute is beyond intellectual grasp; it is transcendental.'

Bhagawaan Gopinath's *maha-vakya* 'amar chha maraan?' does not accept the Madhyamik position of the essencelessness of things and the world as he was wedded to Trika thought of Kashmir Shaivism. Such a position of 'Madhyamik has been polemically controverted byUtpaldev as a logician in his principal work known as 'Ishvar Pratyabhijjna'.

Transcendental Being in Vijnanvad

Lankavatar-sutra as the source of philosophy of Vijnanvad unmistakably expounds consciousness as the only reality and declares the three worlds as the products of thought. 'Pravritti Vijnan' and 'Alaya Vijnan' are the two main principles of Vijnanvad, which is essentially a non-dual dispensation. To a votary of Vijnanvad, consciousness or broadly a mental phenomenon alone is the ultimate

reality. 'Alaya Vijnan' as the repository of *dharmas* (elements) is responsible for''Vijnan' to emerge for mundane purposes. 'Pravritti 'Vijnan' is ever dynamic 'Chitta' that manifests the multiplicity in the world. It is not the same as 'self' but is only a manifestation of 'Alay Vijnan'. Vijnanvad holds consciousness as unchanging, eternal and ever-abiding principle that serves as the substratum for all duality. To explain the world, Vijnanvad has devised a category of 'Vasana' which is responsible for the creation. It also rejects the world to uphold the supremacy of' consciousness', *chitta* as Vedanta does.

The golden epistemic expression of Bhagawaan Gopinathji subscribes to the eternality of consciousness or Shiva, but does not negate the world of objects as insubstantial or false or illusory as the said expression as a 'maha-vakya' does not have any other aphoristic saying as an auxiliary to uphold the Buddhist view. It is a symbolic expression which in the words of Paul Tillich "unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions of elements of reality. A great play gives not only a new vision of the human scene, but it also opens up the hidden depths of our own being. Thus, we are able to receive what the play reveals to us in being. There are within us the dimensions of which we cannot become aware except through symbols as melodies and rhythms in music."

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Bhagawaanji :
"Amar Chha Maraan – Does the Immortal Die"?

– Prof. V. N. Drabu

The Kauravas and Pandavas are in military array, ready for combat, in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Arjuna, mounted on a chariot, with a bow and arrow in his hand, is suddenly smitten with a frost-bite of grief and remorse.

'*na yotse iti Govindam, uktva tusnim babhuva ha*' : 'O Govinda! I shall not fight *just for a piece of territory or an inch of land*! (emphasis mine). Such a Visada yoga could happen only to Arjuna and to no other warrior. Sensing the state of his mind, Lord Krishna says:

Kutstva kasmalam idam visame sam-upasthitam Anaryajustham asvargyam akiritikaram ca Arjuna

'Why this *ajnana* (lit. ignorance or lack of proper understanding) O Arjuna ? it is unlike, an Aryan, not conducive to *svarga* (heaven), and leading to infamy'. Then follows a discourse on the nature of Atma and its immortality in the midst of the battlefield.

'Weapons do not cleave it; fire does not burn it; water does not drench it; wind does not dry it up; it is unborn and eternal'. 'Like worn-out clothes, man leaves this body just to take on to another like new clothes'. (*Gita*, II.23)

Bhagawaan Gopinathji in his Kashmiri dialect affirms the truth of the same statement. 'Amar chha maran?' is an aphorism that very lucidly contains what has been profusely stated by our seers, *risis* and *munis* in all our philosophical treatises and metaphysical philosophy. He was reticent about what had been said and what was discussed in religious congregations and guru-disciple *sampradaya* (assembly). An introvert by his *svabhava* (inherent nature), he would throw a hint here and there, without entering into any discourse, leaving the threads to be woven into a beautiful mosaic by his devotees and earnest disciples. Once, when literally awakened (got into *bahir-mukha*) by one of his *bhaktas* (devotees),

tormented by the malignancy of his wife, Bhagawaan Gopinathji asks him to identify his real spouse in a group of those that had already departed. Shocked and amazed, the *bhakta* could not say 'who was who'. What Bhagawaan Ji wants to convey and impress is that we enter into numerous life-cycles, relations and associations, all of an ephemeral happiness, to bear the fruit of our *Karmic* actions. Nothing is permanent; nothing lasts for ever. We little know that this body is a sheath that one has to cast aside, and that the core (*atma*) takes on to a new body. The *Atma* dies not; only the physical frame falls apart. Obviously, a human being is impoverished by his physical body, but the soul is nourished by virtuous deeds and honesty of purpose. In a way Bhagawaanji upholds the theory of predestination, a belief that everything about life and the future has already been decided by God and fate, and cannot be changed. Only a new consciousness is to be awakened that a *jiva*, by his tireless and sincere efforts and a spotlessly keen intellect, can realize the supreme truth that where everything is perishable –name, fame, riches and all the accumulated treasures; only what lasts and what gives meaning to a being is the immortality of the soul. It is only his *caitanya* or *cittabhasa* that can reinforce a bridge between his mortal frame and the eternal soul that can either bind him to his *samsara* or secure his release from his mundane existence. He holds the reins of his mind's horse / steed to get entry into the nature and functioning of the soul. He is called *dhira* (धीर).

The eldorado is before him and the key lies in his pocket; with the awakening soul-force, a true *bhakta* gains entry into the divine realm and he is freed from the bondage of existence. All the 212 bones in the human body, which are otherwise polluted by our sensual desires, will co-operate with him to get entry into and have a vision of the divine soul within him. A devotee has to understand that so long as he is a slave to his passions and *indriya-vargas* (host of *indriyas*), the soul-force is asleep, and difficult to be awakened and the freedom from the cycle of birth and death quite hard to attain.

Bhagawaanji therefore has got an important message across. Try to realize to your full capacity the potential that lies in your immortal soul, an indissoluble part of the Universal soul.

Here, I am reminded of Lalla's *vaakh* : *Niyam kortha garbha, chitas karba piye, marna bronthi marba, marita tai martabai hari.*

'O *jiva*; do you not remember that you had made a pledge when in mother's womb (that you would meditate on the divine)? It is better to die when self-realized rather than die with false laurels'.

The realization of the true nature of the self makes man steady in mind and helps him to attain supreme bliss. By constant effort and living in peace and harmony, one ensures a happy dialogue, so to say, with the soul, and to such a person death has a deeper meaning of fulfilling oneself rather than leaving a corporeal frame that was previously given to sorrowing and conditioning to various situations.

Bhagawaanji, both by his precepts and practices, guides all that come to him either as devotees or as those who are in distress or afflicted by the *pancamahabhuta sarira* (body of five elements). Here he, like Amitabha, treats all with patience and love. But at the same time reminds them that ambitions of whatever nature are all illusory, mere phantoms. Perhaps his inner reactions to all temptations of the flesh are outward. He provides the brief but short aphorism that it is the soul that lives and illuminates us all. He paraphrases the discourse of *Krishna* in a few but simple words, meaning that *pandits* do not grieve for the dead or the living. Indirectly, he hints at the fact that life is a continuous cosmic process of change, through childhood to old age, being reborn in a new body from time to time. The vital consciousness, *caitanya* or *atma* that pervades the universe is immortal (*amar cha maran*?).

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे।। (गीता)

Bhagawaanji re-emphasizes the same truth that Lord Krishna explicitly states to the grief-stricken Arjuna, though, of course, in the form of an aphorism, a short statement. He who knows that it (soul) is

indestructible and eternal, unborn and unchanging –how can such a person slay anyone or cause anyone to slay.? (*Gita*, ii, 21), Bhagawaanji wants his *bhaktas* to understand the difference between the eternal and the transient. A true *sadhaka* or aspirant has to transcend the ego-consciousness that subjects living creatures to experiencing pleasure and pain, joy or sorrow. A self-realized altruistic soul is not caught in the web of the false temptations of the temporal world of needs and insatiable desires.

Bhagawaanji is an integral link in a chain of those realized souls who remain established in a *jiva* on the basis of self-experience, reason and scripture. His ever-blazing *dhoni* (*agni kunda*) is not on the peak of some inaccessible mountain but very much in a populated city. Both lay and devoted disciples congregate to have his *darsan* and benefit from the radiating fire of his *dhoni*, perhaps burning all impurities from which a limited *jiva* suffers and sending out vibrations to communicate with the Supreme. He is a lighthouse that directs, a path-finder that breaks and heals the wounds of those that need his *darsan* to radiate joy, come rain or shine. Bhagawaanji thus belongs to all, and all belong to him. His spiritual path is not divorced from the terrestrial one, though mainly ethereal in nature and content. His vibrations go in all directions, and he sits calm and composed before his *dhoni*, puffing his *chillum* (earthen pipe) intermittently. A close disciple of Bhagawaanji, quite proficient in *bhakti yoga*, has it that he was an incarnation of Visnu / Lord Krishna, combining in himself a few basic elements of *Siva-yoga* as well, thereby tending to synthesize the *bhakti* yoga with that of *Sakta-yoga* and *Sambhava*. yoga. That would ensure his self-cognition. He seems to have either discarded the ascetic practices in the path of self-realization or considered them inferior to *bhakti-yoga* and *sahazas dam sam* technique, taking to contemplation, being absorbed as salt in water. He binds himself to the inner self through a vigorous practice of a pacified *chitta* (mind), cleansed of all impurities, the outward symbols of which were his *chillum* and *dhoni* which he kept

ablaze all the time. Through his strong *ichha* he seems to have practised *ichha-yoga* which is, of course, another variant of *sambhava yoga*. This accounts for the contemplation he is absorbed in as salt in water and the total merger of his consciousness in the light of Supreme consciousness that always throbs in absolute silence and control of *citta*. Being in a perennial state of consciousness, beyond the gyrations of life and death, seems to have led to his liberation (*jivana-mukti*) and so his emphasis on 'amar chha maran?, Bhagawaanji perhaps took to *sahaj yoga*, a simple and natural method of attaining identity with the Supreme. *Sahaja* is used here as a metaphor for reality, the detailed exposition of which forms the core of Kashmir Saivism and would imply staying put in a felt spiritual experience and *dam*, which is to sublimate the breathing process (*prana* and *apana*). Ordinarily understood as suppressive techniques, they were used by Bhagawaanji as refined tools to stay in a felt spiritual experience of 'constant awareness'. As a halcyon *yogi* one is wonder. struck by the gaze directed perhaps towards some supernatural phenomenon, to some trailing light of glory that a normal human being completely fails to comprehend.

Now, turning to the vast corpus of metaphysic school we immediately come to the core of Indian philosophy contained in the *Upanishads* that solve the riddle of human existence. A few references here from the main ones vividly expound, though briefly, the essence of the immortal soul and how it directs the perennial flow of life here and hereafter. Perhaps no liniment is so effective in removing the doubts and hard facts as these short statements expressing a general truth about the essence of 'What is What'. *Isa, Kena*, *Katha*, *Mandukya*, *Mundaka*, *Taittriya*, *Aitreya*, *Chandogya*– all these Upanishads deal with themes such as *Atma* and other matters of intellectual interest. They form an important milestone in the development of philosophical and religious consciousness in India. The reasons are obvious. Vedic hymns and *mantras* were mostly concerned with the sacrifices and *homa* to gods (*yajnas*) only to

propitiate them for bestowal of prosperity in life, abundance of crops and protection of cattle-wealth, and protection against any disaster caused by the elements of nature. With the passage of time, clear reasoning and perception, the Vedic hymns burgeoned forth in the *Upanisadic* tracts to solve the crux of the problem of those who were beset by doubts in the quest of the self. Man's life on this earth is very short. This being so, man is naturally interested in knowing what is lasting that can shower favours on him and fulfil all his expectations of a happy life without any adverse effects. Experience of pleasure and pain differs from individual to individual; this obviously implies that there is a व्यष्टि आत्मा in each *jiva*. This *atma* is said to be the breadth of the ten-thousandth part of the front point (portion) of a single thread of hair; this suggests how subtle it is. The *Svetasvatara Upanisad* (V.9) confirms its measurement thus:

बालाग्रशतभागस्य शतधा कल्पितस्य च।
भागो जीवः स विज्ञेयः स चानन्त्याय कल्पते।।

"If the front part of a single thread (hair) were divided into hundred parts and each part thereof were further divided into hundred parts, that would constitute the measurement of the *Atma*". Also

केशाग्रशतभागस्य शतांशः सादृशात्मकः ।
जीवः सूक्ष्मस्वरूपोऽयं संख्यातीवो हिचित्कणः।।

"There are innumerable atoms or *paramanus* of the soul that measure the front point (नोक) of a single thread of hair equal to ten-thousandth part of it. So a *jiva* is subtle in nature."

Mundaka Upanisad elaborates it further (III. I. 9):

एषोऽणुरात्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यो यस्मिन्प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश च।
प्राणौश्चितं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां यस्मिन् विशुद्धे विभवत्येष आत्मा।।

"Atma is an atom in shape that can be realized only through pure intellect. This *anu-atma* pervades the five types of *pranas* (*prana*, *apana*, *viyana*, *samana* and *udana*). This is stationed in the heart and has its impact on the entire body-organism of a *jiva*. When this *atma* is cleansed of its layers of five elemental ignorance, its spiritual force is then fully realized.

The entire corpus of metaphysical philosophy is centred round this basic truth, including the Vedas. Only a highly enlightened and realized *jiva* can truly understand it. *Mundaka Upanishad* has it that this व्यष्टि आत्मा is stationed in the heart along with *Paramatma* which releases the entire energy-flow in a human organism. The atoms of the soul may be compared to the atoms of the light of the sun that contains innumerable atoms of *tejas*.

There are no by-products of *Atma*. Being eternal and immortal, it has no history of birth or death or the multiplication of an individual that breeds, so to say, and multiplies into other living organisms. The *Atma* is free from the six changes of a human body; it neither grows nor changes.

Kathopanisad (I. 2. 18.) says :

'Na jayate mriyete va vipascitannayam
Kutascitnna, babhuva kascita
Ajo nityah sasvotoyam, purano, Na
Hanyte hanyamane sarire

It is similar in meaning to the *sloka* we have in the *Gita*, only with the difference of the word *vipascita* which means the 'learned' or '*jnanamaya*' (fully developed intellect). This would mean that *Atma* is always suffused with *jnana* or *cetana*, which would suggest that *cetana* is the characteristic of *atma*, which in *Saiva* corresponds to *caitanyam atma*.

There are two forms, so to say, of *Atma* : *anu atma* and *vibhu atma*[1].

In *Kathopanisad* (I. 2. 20) :

Anorniyanmahato mahiyanatmasys
Jantornihito guhayam
Tamakrituh pasyati vitasoka dhatu
Prasadanmahimnam atmanah

"*Paramatma* and *anu-atma* both exist in the heart of the body, the tree of a *jiva*. And of these the one that is totally free from desires and sorrows (*sokas*)–he alone can understand the glory (*mahima*) of *atma*. If the fountainhead, Lord Krishna, is the source of *Paramatma*,

and Arjuna is like *anu-atma*, who has totally forgotten his true nature through Maya, through the veil of ignorance, then re-awakening either through the Lord Himself or through a well-recognised and proficient guru is not impossible.

It is an acknowledged fact that the body undergoes changes through *anu-atma*, right from childhood to youth, and then to old age. The transformed *jiva's* old age is then transferred to another body, thus fulfilling the wishes of the *anu-atma*. It is just like fulfilling the wishes of one's friend by another. In *Mundaka* and *Svetasvatara Upanisads, Atma* and *Paramatma* are compared to two bird-friends who are perched on the branch of the same tree. One of the birds eats fruit of the *anu-atma* tree and the other one just watches/observes how he relishes the fruit.[2]

Mundaka Upanisad and Svetasvatara Upanisad both affirm that it is true.

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः ।
जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ।।

Although the birds are perched on the branch of the same tree, the one engaged in eating the fruit is in a state of worry and sadness: Were he to turn and understand the (freedom / independence) *Svatantrya* of the Lord, he would instantly be freed from sorrow. The metaphor used here suggests that Arjuna, instead of feeling distressed over the killing of his grandfather (पितामह) etc. Guru, should have considered it his rightful duty and devotion in releasing both of them from the bondage of sinful actions. The *jivatama*, in a sense, is fully occupied in the constant struggle of enjoying itself in the body-tree. But the moment he sees his *paramaguru* in the other bird and takes refuge in him, he is set free from the error and pain of the *jivatma*.

Here I would like to have a little digression: Lalla's *vakh* embodies the most significant yogic experience:

'*Cidanandas jnana prakasas*
Yimava Cyun tim zeevantai mokhta

visayamis samsarnis pasayas
abodi gandah shyat-shyat ditya'

"They who have known the Supreme Self (Compact of the Bliss of Pure Consciousness and the Light of Knowledge Absolute), they are *jivana-muktas* (who, while alive have found release from ever- recurring birth and death). The ignorant add knot to knot, in hundreds, to the tangled web of *Samasara*, its recurrent births, in recurrent deaths?". (Translation by Prof. J.L. Kaul)

Lalla makes herself clear about the dilemma of an *anu* (*jiva*) tossed up whether he will get there in his present state of mind. Lalla was liberated while living. A *jiva* is not. When a *jiva* realizes his self, he too, like the immortal soul, is released from any bondage while stationed in his physical frame. *Vibhu* is omniscient. Vedic mantras state

एष उ ह्येव साधु कर्म कारयति तं यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्यः
उन्निनीषते । एष उ एवासाधु कर्म कारयति यमधो निनीषते ।

'The Almighty guides a *jiva* to good deeds to uplift him and bad deeds that lead him to hell'. (*Kausitaki Upanisad*, III. 8)

I. 'The indwelling spirit of a *jiva* controls the whole cosmos. His body comprises nine doors (entrances) – two eyes, two nostrils, a mouth, two ears, an anus (उपस्थ) and a urethra.

II. *Svetasvatara* Upanisad, III. 18.

Intellect (बुध्दि) is said to be the close neighbour of *Atma* which is immediately influenced by its pure or polluted form. A sensual-oriented *buddhi* leads to *ahamkara* which, in turn, leads the mind and *indriyas* (sensory organs) to indulge in earthly pleasures and carnal sins. All that disturbs the balance of *Atma* and leads to its distortion. This has been very beautifully elaborated in *Srimad Bhagvatam* (X.84.13).

यस्यात्मबुद्धिः कुणपे त्रिधातुके स्वधीः ।
कलत्रादिषु भौम इज्यधीः ।।
यत्तीर्थबुद्धिः सलिले न काहचिज्जनेष्व ।।
भिज्ञेषु स एव गोखरः ।।

"The person who considers this body of *tridhatus* as *Atmasvarupa* and identifies himself with all the body-changes, regards the birth-place as worthy of respect, and is not prepared to offer his pilgrimage to a person of divine wisdom but just for a holy dip, he should be regarded as a bull or an ass":

The mind and the *indriyas* of such a person become the resorts of *kama,* and *buddhi* is converted into their capital. When a *jiva* recognizes his true nature through the medium of his eternal and everlasting *atma* compared to *jnanagni*, all his past and present actions are totally burnt, whether good or bad. In *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* it is stated: उभे उहैवैश एते तरत्यमतः साध्नसाधूनी– 'The *jiva* wins over the fruit of both good and bad *karmas.* (lit., meaning that the result of his good and bad actions are consumed by fire). He is liberated while staying in his physical frame (*Svetasvatara Upanisad* III. 18)

Kathopanisad elaborates this theme thus :

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव च,
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च।
इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान्
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः।। (*Kathopanisad* 13.3-4)

"Every *jiva* is mounted on this chariot of the body. *Budhi* is the charioteer, *manas* is the reins and *indriyas* are the horses. Thus through *manas* and *indiryas* this *atma* enjoys pleasure or pain (सुख या दुःख). This is what the wise say".

About this 'atma' *Chandogya Upanishad* observes:

'न वै वाचो न चक्षूंषि न श्रोत्राणि न
मनांसीत्याचक्षते प्राण इति एवाचक्षते
प्राणो ह्यैवैतानि सर्वाणि भवन्ति' V.I.15

A *jiva's* ability to speak, to see, to hear, to think – all this is derived from *Prana*, the locus of his existence.

A *jiva* should fully understand that ब्रह्मास्मि – 'I am atma'. This recognition of the Supreme consciousness is the प्रत्यभिज्ञा of the *Saivas* and the *bhakti* of the *Vaisnavites*. *Bhakti* has as much

relevance in *Saiva* philosophy as it has in the core of *Vaisnavism*.

What matters most is the recognition of the self. *Naciketas*, when reprimanded by his angry father, seeks to know who Yama is. To his custody he is being sent. *Naciketas*, straightaway repairs to *Yama* to know what *atma* is. Despite all persuasions by the God of death to put him off, he eagerly sought to know the mystery of death in preference to other things and temptations. He is enlightened on the subject of the immortality of the soul. *Raja Pariksit's* apprehension for his own safety arising out of a curse of a *Rsis*' son, leads him to the *asrama* of Sukadeva. He returns calm and composed to his palace after listening to the persuasive arguments of the great sage. He is no more frightened by his early death. At the other extreme, we have the example of *Raja Janaka*. Master of a great kingdom, he is overcome by *vairagya* (the spirit of renunciation). But far from rushing to caves and forests, he, in his very palace, seeks a straight answer from the God of fire (Agni). Result: While living in a palace, one of his legs is being gradually consumed by fire and the other is being fondled or pressed by his *Ranis* (queens). Metaphorically this would suggest that while living in a kingdom of abundance, he, like a *hamsa* moves on his journey of the migration of the soul.

The essence of Bhagawaanji's oft-quoted 'Amar chha maran?' draws our attention to what one should do to attain freedom from the *Karmic* Cycle. This has been beautifully expressed in *Kathopanisad* (II. 2.13) and *Svelasvatara Upanisad* (VI.13):

It is one *Param-purusa Paramatma* that governs those countless *jivas*, some of whom are in bondage and some are self-realized.

नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेनानाम् ।।

This immortal *atma* pervades all. When realized, it is close to us, but when forgotten, it is very distant with strangers (lit. the ignorant ones).

तमेव विदित्वाति मृष्त्युमेति (*Svetasvatara*)!

But the Upanishad says: (III.8.) 'In all situations the *Atma* stays close to *jiva*'.

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाय: | | (III.8)

Notes :

1. *Vibhu* means *Paramesvara* who is the repository of limitless *Jnana*, riches, energy, fame, beauty and renunciation. Always self satisfied and righteous, he is free from sin. 2. Although both the birds possess the same quality, the one is wholeheartedly engaged and attracted by the physical tree and the other is a witness to his friend, as was his wont. Metaphorically, it suggests that Krishna is a witness-bird, and Arjuna, the other bird, is totally absorbed in his delicious feed. That makes one the master and the other a *sevaka* (slave) of what he likes most. It is *anu-atma* that causes his forgetfulness of moving from one tree to another or from one body to another. *Jivatma* is deeply engaged / enmeshed in his daily routine, but the moment he sees the other one, he, of his own free will, takes refuge in him, and is freed from all afflictions.

Amar Chha Maraan?

"Does the Immortal die"?

(Thus Spake Bahgawaanji)

– R.K. Saproo

As per the biographical sketch of Bhagawaan Gopinathji, written by one of his senior devotees, namely, Sh. Shanker Nath Fotedar, Bhagawaanji uttered these revelatory words of wisdom "Amar chha maran?" only to dispel the apprehension lurking in the mind of a devotee about Bhagawaanji's impending death owing to his bad health.

The said devotee had visited Bhagawaanji about a month and a half before his actual 'Nirvaan' on Sunday, the 26 May, 1968. Seeing the deteriorating health condition of Bhagawaanji, the said devotee got into a depressive mood. Thus Bhagawaanji uttered these enlightening words springing from his vast spiritual experience to dispel the spiritual ignorance of people like us who mistake the body for the real self of man.

Needless to say, Bhagawaanji did not utter these words on the basis of any bookish knowledge, nor did he quote any scripture in his support. This spontaneous out pouring of the Bhagawaan was indeed the result of his intuitive knowledge and practical out-of- body experience that he had undergone.

In spite of the facts stressed above, what a common man can actually grasp or make out of this *Mahavakaya* of Bhagawaanji is directly related to his depth of knowledge and spiritual understanding. The other day, I talked to a friend of mine and told him about this particular statement of Bhagawaanji. He replied that this is quite an ordinary and commonplace statement; for everybody knows that Atman (soul) does not die at the time of death. Since the commonly used term '*Atman*' means different things to different people, we need to analyse this term in the light of the constituent elements which constitute human personality before and after death.

Thus, Adi Shankaracharya says in verse 160 of *Viveka Chudamani*:

"The dull-witted man thinks he is only the body; the book-learned man identifies himself with the mixture of body and soul. But the sage, possessed of realization through discrimination, looks upon the eternal 'Atman' as his self and thinks, 'I am Brahman, the self of all'. Again, Adi Shankaracharya quotes the following verse from one of the Smritis;

"*Sarvabhutatma bhutasya sarva bhutahitasyaca,*
Deva api marge muhyanti apadasya padaishinah".

"Even the gods feel puzzled while trying to follow in the footsteps of those who leave no track behind; of those who realize themselves in all beings and who are always devoted to the welfare of all."

In the above-quoted verse, Shankara is referring to the enlightened sages like Bhagawaanji for whom death is a transition to a more energetic, blissful and unfettered existence conducive to more effective service of mankind.

What elements of human personality survive death?

The inner personality of man, consisting of ego, intellect and mind together with astral body and senses, does not perish at the time of physical death; when the life force (*prana*) acting as bridge between the mind and the physical body leaves the body.

Bereft of self-realization and ignorant about the pre-supposed existence of spaceless, causeless, timeless and immutable transcendental self of pure consciousness, ordinary man takes these elements of lower Nature called '*Apara prakriti*' as his real self. By identifying himself with these empirical elements of his personality called *Upaadhis*, which include '*Panchbutic sharir*' i.e. five-elemental body, he finds himself caught in the vicious cycle of life and death. Lord Krishna explains this in these two verses of *Shrimad Bhagvadgita* (verse 61, chap. 18):

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारुढानि मायया ।।

"The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, and by His delusive power (Maya) causes all beings to revolve as though mounted on a machine."

Verse 7, chapter 15 :
ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभतः सनातनः ।
मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ।।

"An eternal portion of Myself having become the *Jiva* in the world of *Jivas*, attracts the senses with mind as the sixth, abiding in *Prakriti.*"

Bhagawaanji, while discouraging too much attachment to bookish knowledge and putting his weight behind practice and yoga *abhyas*, once remarked, referring to Sh. S.N. Foteder; his disciple, who was those days very much absorbed in the study of "Gospel of Shri Rama Krishna", "*Yi chhui kitab paraan, torchha gash*"? i.e. this man is reading books, is any light there?

For the realization of immortal self i.e. Atman, Bhagawaaṇji laid emphasis on "Sat vichaar" i.e. discrimination between real and unreal; imperishable and perishable. To achieve that purpose, he also discouraged "Saakar Upaasana". According to him, a 'Vichaaravaan' can attain the realization of all the aspects, i.e., *Padaas* of *Brahman*.

Implications of his statement:

Thus falling in line with the Bhagawaanji's recommended path of discriminative thought for the realization of Atman, we may pen down the following implications of the above statement of Bhagawaanji.

(a) Bhagawaanji knew from his personal experience that the body is not necessary for thinking, neither is it a necessary medium for consciousness, because consciousness is all pervasive. In fact, everybody has an experience of consciousness apart from the body; e.g., in dream state, one has consciousness apart from the

gross body.

(b) In deep sleep one has consciousness apart from the subtle body (which is normally active while dreaming or after death).

(c) In the experience of the fourth state of consciousness, called Turiya, one has transcendental consciousness apart from the physical body, the subtle body and the causal body (*kaaran shareer*); which consists of ideas in seed form.

In chapter 6 of *Katha Upanishad*, verse 13, Yama explains the extraordinary Vedantic discipline for the realization of the Atman to Nachiketa:

"Yacchetval manasi prajnah
Tat yacchet jnana atmani
Jnanam atmani mahati niyacchet
Tatyacchet shanta atmani"

"Let the *prajna* (wiseman) merge the speech in the *manas* (mind), and the *manas* in the *buddhi* (intellect); let him merge the *buddhi* in the great self (*mahat*), and that great self again in the self of peace (the *atman* or *purusha*)".

By losing life at the outer levels, we gain it in its inner depths; we lose life which is finite and trivial, and gain life which is infinite and immortal. This is the essence and theme of Bhagawaanji's life. Verses 107 and 108 of *Vijnana Bhairav*, a Shaiva Tantra of Kashmir, can be quoted to highlight the realization of all-pervasiveness of consciousness called *Bhairava* consciousness, which Bhagawaanji had attained.

Verse 107 says:

"One should, leaving aside the need of one's own body, contemplate that the same consciousness is present in other bodies as in one's own body. Thus one becomes all pervasive." The realization of all-pervasiveness of consciousness is the nature of *Bhairav.* Verse 108 says: "Having freed the mind of all supports, one should refrain from all thought constructs. O gazelle - eyed one, there will be the state of *Bhairava* in the self that has become the absolute self."

Bhagawaanji, as we all know, was an introvert by nature. He confined himself to a particular place for years at a time; signifying conquest of 'Asana'. He had overcome the restlessness of body for physical activities and conquered the turbulence of mind by reducing the intake of food and by constant practice of *japa* and meditation. He shunned the very desire of becoming a religious preacher or a Guru and preferred to remain aloof (*gupth*). He did not run after name and fame, to which most of the religious preachers of today seem to be attached. He got absorbed in the practice of 'Shatchakra yoga Sadhana' and tried his best to propitiate the Divine Mother. He soulfully recited *Panchastavi*, a treatise on Shakti worship and understood the inner meaning of each verse of this scripture in the light of his intuitive experience during his rigorous *sadhana*. Broadly speaking, Bhagawaanji was practising what we call 'Sankoch' and 'Vikasa' modes of spiritual discipline characterized by withdrawal or focus and expansion of consciousness. While being in the withdrawal or 'Pratyahaar' mode of spiritual discipline, Bhagawaanji, after deep puffing at the 'chelum', withdrew all consciousness from the body and all sense-organs. He turned up his eye balls and focused his eyes on the region above the forehead, thus establishing himself in the imperishable self beyond the void (*shuniya*).

In this connection, Jesus Christ says, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." The self mastery of a yogi like Bhagawaanji is explained in the two following verses of *Shrimad Bhagvadgita*. Verse 55, chapter 2 :

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वानपार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थित प्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ।।

"When a man abandons, O Partha, all the desires of the heart and is satisfied in the self by the self, then is he said to be one stable in wisdom". Verse 58, chapter 2 :

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।।

"When also, like a tortoise and its limbs, he can withdraw the

senses from sense objects, his wisdom is then set firm."

In the "Vikas" mode of spiritual discipline, a yogi, after considerable practice of inner purification of '*antahkarna*", tries to see the world in a new light as manifestations of Shiva in the form of all-embracing consciousness. He acquires omniscience by realizing that he is everywhere and everything is in him. Verse 67 of *Vijnana Bhairava* explains; "When, by stopping the opening of all senses, the current of all sensory activity is stopped, the *Prana Shakti* moves slowly upward in the middle *nadi* or *sushmina*, from *muladhara* towards *Brahmanrandhra*, then in the upward movement of *Prana Shakti*. There is felt a tingling sensation (at the various stations in the middle *nadi*) like the one created by the movement of an ant over the body. At the moment of that sensation, there ensues supreme delight.

Bhagawaanji's Conquest of Death :

As is evident from his statement "*Amar chha maran*?", Bhagawaanji had for all purposes conquered death while in body. He used to visit the worlds of other time-space dimensions by using astral body travel techniques. He had visited all invisible spheres of name-and-form-world, which are inaccessible to ordinary mortals. He practically conquered the fear of death by frequently visiting *Yama loka, Pitra loka*, *Deva loka*, Shiva *loka* and *Brahma loka* while still living in the physical body. This truth is borne out by the incidents when he was seen addressing the messengers of death called "Yama Dhoots", Mahakaal and other Devatas or Deities while offering ablutions to his Dhooni (fire pot). He once told Mr. Fotedar that *Trikuta Devatas* were attending his Dhooni (offering fire-pot). Let me mention here for the knowledge of devotees that nobody can really conquer the natural attachment to body and fear of death without undergoing out-of-body experiences accompanied by frequent visits to *Yama loka* and the like before actual death. Mere philosophic knowledge may be little help to conquer fear of death which we call *'Yama bhai'*.

Due to intense *sadhana* and Lord Shiva's grace on him,

Bhagawaanji had attained the transcendental Param-Shiva state. which is a state beyond name and form, all ideation and relativity. In this state, one transcends "Aham-Idam" or 'I' and 'this' state of consciousness.

This is spoken of as 'Vishvoteern" aspect of God in the scriptures. This fact has been revealed by Bhagawaanji himself when he quoted verse 6 of chapter 15 of the Bhagavadgita to an Acharya from Banares who wanted to know about Bhagawaanji's spiritual attainment (*avastha*).

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ।।

"That the Sun illumines not, nor the moon, nor fire; that is my supreme Abode, going whither they return not"

What is most noteworthy to understand in this *sloka* is that this self-luminous, infinite and immutable pure consciousness in man is 'Prakash Vimarshimayi'. It does not need the sun, moon or fire to illumine it. The Lord calls it "My supreme abode."

So far as the yogic technique is concerned, the above state dawns when a yogi raises his consciousness to a formless realm above the crown of the head. With the help of divine grace, a yogi leaves the body temporarily through the aperture in the crown of the head.

Raising his consciousness above the world of name and form, the yogi transcends his *causal* body, passes through the void (*shuniya*) state and regains his pure *Atmic* state of self-luminous self of pure consciousness.

After the realization of individual *Purusha* and Prakriti state, consciousness becomes aware of the *Purshotam* or *Param* Purusha or Param Shiva state referred to as "My Param Daam" by the Lord in the verse 6 above. To know God is to be God and not to see God. In view of the above facts about the spiritual stature of Bhagawaanji, it must be clear to the devotees that Bhagawaanji had attained the state of *Jivan Mukhta*. Bhagawaanji knew the secrets of life and death and the consequent destiny of departed souls after death. On several

occasions Bhagawaanji was seen talking to invisible beings who were quite visible to his yogic *Dhrishti*. He had developed the yogic *siddhi* of tracing any soul in any loka and very well knew the ways and means of helping the struggling souls in their process of evolution.

Yogic technique and Bhagawaanji's exit from the body:

Bhagawaanji disassociated himself from so many activities before he attained *Mahasamadi*. For example, he remarked, about a month before leaving the gross body, that "this *Dhooni* is not required now" For the first time in his life, he asked the musicians to stop on 26th May, 1968, his last Sunday on this earth.

Using his yogic powers, he did not allow even his near and dear ones to be near him during his last hours of heavenly departure, with the result that only three fortunate people were present at the time of his death. All this he did to avoid disturbance in his yogic concentration at the time of his final departure from the body.

As per the scriptures, this final moment is considered to be very crucial for the future destiny of the soul. Bhagawaanji uttered "Om Namah Shivaaye" at the time of leaving his body.

As per his own admission, Bhagawaanji said *Shrimad Bhagvadgita* can be one's guru. The following verses of *Shrimad Bhagvadgita* describe the yogic technique of leaving the body at the time of death:

Verse 5, chapter 8:

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवर्म ।
यः प्रयाति स मदभावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ।।

"And whoever, at the time of death, leaving the body, goes forth remembering me alone, he attains My being. There is no doubt about this". Verses 12 and 13, chapter 8:

"सर्वद्धाराणि संयम्य मनोह्रदि निरूध्य च ।
मूध्न्र्याधायात्मनः प्राणामास्थितो योग धारणाम् ।।
"ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्य जन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ।।

"All the gates of the body closed, the mind confined within the heart, having fixed his life-energy in the head, engaged in firm yoga, uttering the one - syllabled 'Om', Brahman; thinking of me, he who departs, leaving the body, attains the supreme goal."

Bhagawaanji's incomprehensible state after death:

As per *Shrimad Bhagvadgita*, the *jivatamas* transmigrating through death, pass along two paths known as *Devayana*; the divine path and *pitryana*, the path of the ancestors, or that of the fathers. They are described as the path of light and the path of smoke respectively. The former is bright and the latter is dark. Death is the indicator of the attainments of a soul in the span of life. The soul pursuing the path of knowledge gets progressively into the brilliance of Atman. That other soul which is steeped in ignorance stagnates and deteriorates. Thus verse 24 of chapter 8 of *Shrimand Bhagavadgita* says:

"अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ।।

"Fire, light, daytime, the brighthalf of the moon and the six months of the northern path of the sun, then going forth, the knowers of Brahman go to Brahman".

The above-mentioned conditionalities very much apply to Bhagawaanji's departure from the body in the year 1968 on the auspicious day of *Jyeshta Shukla Dyutiya* . Prior to the time of departure from the body, Bhagawaanji did not enter death slumber characterized by unconsciousness, as is usually the case with most of us. As per *Shrimad Bhagavadgita*, *jiva* has an ample chance of self realization at this time of "Anterdhiyaana" i.e. the state of natural withdrawal and inner focus of the mind, provided he remains fully conscious and concentrated at the time of death.

Yogis are left with two options at the time of departing from the body. Desiring to give up the body, a yogi allows the vital energy to pass through different centres of consciousness at the navel, heart, throat and the centre between the eyebrows called 'Ajna Chakra'. At

this point, one or two things may come to pass. If the yogi has reached the state of desirelessness or if he does not have any particular commandment from God to serve the creation in a particular *Sahasrara*, the vital energy ascends to the Sahasrara, the thousand - petalled lotus-centre in the brain and goes beyond towards the door-way to Brahman, then the yogi, realizing his unity with Brahman, completes the separation of himself from Sahasrara, the sense organs, the mind and the body, and then he passes away. He attains what is known as absolute freedom. This is called immediate liberation. On the other hand, if, having raised his vital energy to the centre between the eyebrows, the yogi has still some unfulfilled desires or unfulfilled missionary work of God, he does not merge into absolute unity, but passes away still associating with the mind and the senses in one form or another. He then ascends to the higher *lokas* and finally reaches *Brahma loka*. There he frees himself from all desires and duties which include service to humanity and finally attains *mukti* which the scriptures call 'Kram mukti' i.e. liberation by stages. He may remain an eternal witness to the entire cycle of creation and dissolution. It is my personal opinion that Bhagawaanji has chosen the second path which enables a yogi to help struggling souls like us to attain liberation. Bhagawaanji has, in compliance with the wish of the Supreme, chosen the path of service to individual souls living in this world and the next. He was aptly called by his fellow mystics as "Shahanshahi Do-jahan" i.e. the king of this world and the next. In fact, there can be no higher destiny of a liberated soul than the service to *Param-Atma* of whom he is an integral part. This fact is in full agreement with the teachings of Chaitanya Maha-Prabhu Bhakta, an incarnation of Krishna-soul who did not consider *Mukti* as the supreme aim of an individual soul. The supreme fulfilment of the growth of the *Jiva Atma* is to serve *Param Atma* as his obedient deputy in this whole creation. This is in accordance with the principles of *Bhaagvat Dharam*. Needless to say, Bhagawaanji has owned a *Divya Sharira* i.e. divine body full of divine energy and bliss

to enable him to continue his mission of service to mankind uninterruptedly and unabatedly.

He continues to communicate with aspiring devotees to help them in their spiritual progress. He also fights against unrighteous and anti-evolutionary forces to restore world-order. He commands the magical power of attracting a host of fresh devotees who never happened to know him during his life-time. This is the only reason why the number of his devotees is swelling day by day.

For want of space it may not be possible for me to give the details of innumerable incidents where Bhagawaanji has appeared on this physical plane even after his *Nirvaan*. On several occasions, he has come to the rescue of his devotees during accidents, terrorist firing, hospitalization and in response to sincere prayers. He has been instrumental in fulfilling '*Mano Kamna*' of many devotees even after casting off his mortal frame. He has the capacity of initiating fresh devotees on the spiritual path by working from the astral plane and bestowing spiritual boons on them. His divine play continues unabated in the interest of the welfare of mankind even after shedding off his mortal frame. This is the truth and practical implication of his utterance, "AMAR CHHA MARAN?" Om Tat Sat

Brief elaboration of Bhagawaanji's maha-vakya "Amar Chha Maran?" in the form of Kashmiri poetic verses with brief translation in English

The spiritual message of every religion is the message of immortality. If God is immortal, man, being a child of God or a spark of God, is also immortal. The Upanishads speak of the self of man as Brahman, the infinite and immortal:
"Tat tvam asi" - 'That thou art'.

Shrimad Bhagavadgita in verse 20, chapter 2 also stresses the immortality of Atman. Lord Krishna, while addressing Arjuna, says in this verse:

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि–
न्नायं भूत्वा भविता व न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो–
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ।।

The Atman is neither born nor does it die. Coming into being and ceasing to be–neither takes place in it. Unborn, eternal, constant and ancient, it is not killed when the body is slain.

Bhagawaan Gopinathji has also spoken the essence of Brahmvidya by using only three words of his native Kashmiri language, viz. "अमर छा मरान?" – Does what is immortal die? In spite of this truth about the immortality of man being stressed by so many saints and seers besides our scriptures, ordinary man finds himself conditioned by the body and senses. He appears finite, limited and miserable although in his true nature he is unconditioned, infinite and free. "God enchained is man; man unchained is God. Caught in the net of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and space), Brahman weeps (as man)", said Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa.

True religion in its spiritual manifestation can be defined as "a flight of the alone to the alone". Thus to attain liberation from pain and suffering, man has to learn to move away from 'Vishyananda i.e. sense pleasures, or at least develop detachment from sense pleasures. Let him give preference to 'Bhajan-ananda' i.e. to the joy arising from Bhajana or worship of God by singing his name and glories. It also includes the pure joys of the mind arising from intellectual, artistic and moral sources. The third type of joy mentioned by Sri Ramakrishna is 'Brahmanand', i.e. the joy arising from the direct vision of God.

Bhagawaan Gopinathji is called the Bhagawaan by his devotees simply because by mere repetition of his name with love and devotion, a devotee experiences peace and spiritual joy from within himself. Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa calls this pure joy of the devotee by the name of *Bhajanananda* and *Brahmananda*. It is

because of his self-realization that God's *sat-chit-anand swroop* is very much manifest and palpable in Bhagawaanji, whose vibrations are felt by the devotees every now and then. *Shrimad Bhagavadgita,* verses 21 and 22, chapter 5 further elucidate this point:

"बाह्यस्पर्शोष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ।।

With the self detached from the external contacts, he realizes the bliss in the self. Devoted to the meditation of *Brahman*, he enjoys imperishable bliss.

"ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ।।

The delights that are contact-born are verily the wombs of pain; they have, O son of Kunti, a beginning and an end; no wise man rejoices in them.

By identifying himself with the divine immortal Self in him, Bhagawaanji spoke the essence of *Brahm Vidya* in only three words of Kashmiri language:

'अमर छा मरान?' It may be appropriate to further elaborate on this *mahavakya* in Kashmiri language, in the form of the following poem entitled, "गुरु आत्मदीव" i.e. "Guru - the Divine Self Says." (The Nectar of Immortality) :

"गुरु आत्म दीव वनान"
(अमरतायि हुँद अमृत)
Guru - the Divine Self says :

1. गुरु आत्म दीव वनान, कोन छुख च़ बोज़ान,
ब्रह्मी विद्यायि हुँद सार, जिंदजुव गछ बोज़ान ।
परता हरि ऊँ, ऊरि, ऊँ, ऊरि, ऊँ, ऊरि, ऊँ, हरि,

'O friend, while still living in the body, listen to the essence of *Brahmi vidya* (divine knowledge about Brahman). Here is the divine knowledge 'spoken by Guru - 'who is the divine self within you. Chant Hari Om, Hari Om, Hari Om ... (there is no sense in chanting *Brahm Vidya* into the ear of a dead person as per custom. It shall be more fruitful to chant *Brahmividya* or its essence while you are still

living in the body.

2. न छुसय यि तन ब् , न छुसय यि मन ब् ,
ब हा छुसय अमर पान् , कोन ज़ानान छुख ।
न छुसय यि तन ब्, न् छुसय यि मन ब ।।० ।।

Neither am I this body nor the mind; I am verily the divine immortal self above them. "O my friend, remember and live this truth. Chant 'Hari Om' 'Hari Om."

3. न छुसय ब मन्क्यन वावन तूफानन मंज़,
मन विषयन हंदुय अमर साक्षी छसय ब् ।
न छुसय यि तन ब् न् छुसय यि मन ब् ।।० ।।

Real 'I' – the divine self cannot be carried away or get affected by the stormy mental turbulence arising in the ocean of the mind for it is their eternal witness (just as the sea-shore is the lone witness to the incessant tides rising in the sea).

4. त्रेगुन दूश यि देह कर्म छुय करान,
अकर्ता स्वरूप गुनातीन छुसय ब् ।
न छुसय यि तन ब् न् छुसय यि मन ब् ।।

This body, being the product of three Gunas i.e. Sat, Rajas and Tamas, characterized by light, activity and darkness, or peace, passion and inertia, is impelled by three mental moods (Gunas) to act in this world. In contrast, the immortal self is above three Gunas and hence non-doer of actions. This transcendental divine self is the real 'I'; hence know and live this truth.

5. न छुसय अज्ञानचे काल अनिगटि मंज़ ।
न छुसय ब् ज्ञान गाशिचे वुज़मलि मंज़ ।।
अज्ञान त् ज्ञान् दूर स्वप्रकाश छुसय ब् ।।

The dark dense clouds of ignorance can neither eclipse nor affect this real 'I' in man. Likewise, this immortal 'I' should not be confused with what we call *Jnana* or knowledge. This immortal self, being above *Jnana* or *Ajnana*, lives in its own world of self - luminosity characterized by pure consciousness.

6. नाम रूप संसार छुय संकल्प शक्ति म्यान,
रंग रूप दॉरिथ पान् बे रंग छुसय ब् ।

न छुसय यि तन ब् न छुसय यि मन ब्।।

This world of name and form is the outcome of 'Sankalp Shakti' of the Divine who lives inside you. Thus it is the power of volition or *Ichha Shakti* of the Divine which holds together this huge world-structure. Though essentially without any name and form in itself, God is the source of all name and form in this world.

7. न छुसय ब् चोन त् म्यानिस दुयत् भ्रमस मंज़,
विश्व रूप दॉरिथ कुन ब् न छुसय यि मन ब्।।

The confusion of separateness of 'you' and 'I' created by the mind imprisoned in body consciousness, cannot deceive Me. The divine 'I' in you resides in unity-consciousness and encompasses the whole universe.

8. यमि रूप च् वुछिहम, सुय रूप छुसय ब्,
यिथ पाठय च् वुछिहम तिथ पॉठिय वुछय ब्।
न छुसय यि तन ब् न् छुसय यि मन ब्।।

Being the source of all name and form and yet beyond form, divine overself in you takes the very form that you adore and worship. The way and the perspective in which you look at and approach the divine, the same angle and viewpoint it adopts for you and reflects the same like a clean mirror.

9. न तानि हुंद गुलाम न मनकुय गुलाम,
बस हा अहंकारहीन आज़ान छुसय ब्।
न छुसय यि तन ब् न् छुसय यि मन ब्।।

The body and the mind can never truly enslave the immortal Self. The egoless divine self thus rejoices in the unchained atmosphere of freedom and liberation.

10. म्याने फवलनय सिरिय च्न्द्रम फवलान,
सतुक परम सत, गाशुक गाश छुसय ब्।
न छुसय यि तन ब् न् छुसय यि मन ब्।।

The sun and the moon own their luminosity to the luminosity of the divine which is self-conscious. This divine self in you is the truth of truth and the light of light.

शब्द प्रकाश छुय वति अख पड़ाव म्योन।

शून्यस मंज़ रूज़िथ प्रकाशविमर्श छुसय ब् ।।
न छुसय यि तन ब् न छुसय यि मन ब् ।।०।।

The unstruck divine sound and light are only the landmarks on the path leading to the Divine self. The divine self resides beyond the self-created void called Maha-Shuniya, characterized by Prakash, Vimarsh. Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita* calls this "My Paramdam".

वॉनी क्याह वर्णन करि तस परावॉनी
नाद रूप भवानी, दिय अव्यक्त ज़ॉनी,
न छुसय यि तन ब् न् छुसय यि मन ब् ।।

The speech (vani) by itself cannot describe that which is beyond speech (i.e. *paravani*). It is only the grace of 'Shabd Mayi Bhavani that can really lift you to that realm which is beyond name, form and speech.

Amar Chha Maraan?

(An analytical perspective)

– Prof. H. L. Kadlabju

Within us and with us is God. According to the *Upanishads*, man is Him (*Tat tvam asi*) 'Thou art that'. Man exists because of Him, belongs to Him and is Him. God is all-powerful, omnipresent, omniscient, the creator and ruler of the universe. Devotion to Him is essential, a primary requirement, to develop concentration, equanimity and a sense of purpose in life. Of course, devotion is not just chanting of prayers, or bowing before Him, in image form or otherwise and offering flowers. More important is to develop total faith where, as observed by Mahatma Gandhi, the silent thought can be more potent than the spoken word. *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* also advises total surrender before God for attaining supreme and eternal peace :-

"तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ।।" (18/62)

God is thus the quintessence of human existence, the *raison d'etre* for life. Man is an embodiment of His will, whose destiny is the product of the design laid down by Him. Devotion is a means, a useful and effective tool, for man to know Him, and more than Him, his own self. It aids him in the development of his mind and in his finding a wholesome, positive and enlightened approach to life, through a process which sublimates him and strengthens godliness in him. The feeling of nearness of God truly invests his physical body with spiritual upliftment.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the physical body of a human being has to disintegrate and embrace the inevitable end in the form of death. Every birth is an augury of death, and the seed carried with birth fructifies eventually into the final departure. Death is a necessary concomitant of life and the two are inseparable and inter-twined, like the two sides of the same coin. Death is the ultimate reality, unalterable, unavoidable and definite. It is like a constant

companion of life, invisible but real, lurking around, set to make its appearance, though just once, causing cessation of breath for ever and dragging life away to the other world, never to return. *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* advises that this certainty of death should not make one Sad :-

"जातस्य हि ध्रुवोः मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ।।" (2 / 27)

But is physical death the closure of the chapter for a human being? The astral body, which is perceived as a spiritual counterpart of the physical body, is believed to survive after the physical body is no more. The soul is immortal and enters another body after its tenure in the present body is over. The soul transcends all natural and worldly pain, suffering, and other phenomena. According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, the soul has no beginning and no end, and with the death of the physical body, it does not vanish. As stated in *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* :

"न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि–
न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ।। (2 / 20)

It is to be understood that a man can live on, and indeed does, even after death, in a new body, where his soul finds an abode on the basis of his deeds (*karmas*) in the previous birth. Life and death exist in a cyclical form, one making a way for the other, till the soul, through exalted *karma*, attains salvation (*Moksha*). In view of this, death can be seen as sleep, in which, for a certain period, one is cut off from the world and is virtually away, as if in death, till one wakes up and returns to resume worldly activities. Sleep is also a break with the present (the past too) like death, till one wakes up into the tomorrow that follows (like re-birth). Another situation that can be visualized as delinking oneself from one's existing state is that of deep meditation, in which, through practice, one can not only control one's breath, but even suspend it for a given period of time. If one were to perceive

death in these terms, there is no reason to be scared of it or fear it. On the other hand, the thought of death and the analysis of its implications should be a harbinger of illumination, a guiding factor that speeds up and improves one's performance and management skills, teaching one the proper and efficient use of time and opportunities available. It is a common observation that a person who is declared terminally ill with a limited span of time left for him, often makes the most of the short time trying to seek as much joy and peace as he can from his life. This attitude should, in fact, be imbibed permanently and all the time, if a man wants to make the journey of his life joyous and meaningful, and also useful for himself and others. Some day, one has to leave behind everything in this world, so no time should be wasted but utilized in striving to know God, through sacrifice, selfless service and noble deeds. As one grows old in years, the mind does not age, (unless one ceases to be normal) convincingly bringing out the fact of the immortality of the soul, which is permanent, perennial and eternal.

It is in the context of this interplay of birth and death which only apparently are two separate, mutually exclusive, events but are essentially two ends of the same continuum, that the reality of human life has to be comprehended. Life no doubt is immanent in so far as it only changes shape after the physical body perishes and the soul moves on into another dwelling. The Bible says, "I say unto you, 'If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death'." (John 8:51). The soul inside the body is virtually in confinement, waiting for the man to carry out *karmas* and take the fruits (sweet and bitter) of *karmas* of his previous birth/s. Thus, as the Hindu scriptures say, birth and death are relative terms, assuming meaning in the backdrop of relativity. What is important is that one's 'karma' has to be performed, ideally and hopefully, with a mind that is clean, trained and cultivated well through worship, devotion, meditation, self-restraint, study and deep thought. *Yajurveda* says :

"नीहारेण प्रावृता जल्प्या चासुतृप उक्थशासश्चरन्ति" (17/3)

(The one loaded with ignorance, speaking as a fool, and keen only to preserve his body, only wastes his breath). In other words, one should not spend one's life in idleness, but in acquiring knowledge and in trying to reach God. One should make hard efforts, aspire and try to find enlightenment and be a Buddha (the one who is enlightened) through worship, meditation and introspection, without letting go of enthusiasm, which is the surest sign of life and being alive.

Great spiritual masters who have appeared from time to time have demonstrated through practical and empirical methods the innate quality of human life, which is that the line between life and death is only illusory. It is necessary for one to find guidance, knowledge and inspiration from the accomplished Masters. Developing faith in them is like the dawning of the Sun on the path to enlightenment, as observed by H.H. the Dalai Lama. But it is to be ensured that the Masters are identified properly, as they must possess a high degree of ethics, following strict moral and ethical standards, and also be full of wisdom and be veterans in the art and practice of deep meditation. These pre-requisites have to be looked for and discerned carefully. In fact, the holy *Guru Gita* also carries the injunction that one should never choose a *guru* (a spiritual master) who is not proficient and accomplished, for the reason of his being, unworthy of doing good or for being in-capable:

"न वन्दनीयाः कष्टेपि दर्शने भ्रान्ति–कारकाः ।
गुरवः वर्जनीयाः स्युः सूशिष्यैः सन्मताश्रयैः ।।" (136)

Blessings from genuine and real spiritual gurus are actually boons from heaven. A true *guru* puts one on the right path and the meditation that he or she learns from him gets a course of life that knows no grief, no allurements, no deviation from the righteous conduct, and no fear. Meditation indeed charges the battery of life and transforms the mind, by fully abolishing negativity from it. What is deisirable, however, is to make use of the re-charged energy for the benefit of mankind at large, by inspiring and guiding all to become

good human beings, with selfless love and compassion. A *guru* has the capability of converting a genuine disciple into an outstanding person with high ideals, sublime thoughts and a spirit of selfless service, for the benefit of others, thus serving as a beacon light, energising, illumining and enlightening minds of all those who come into contact with him. The holy *Guru Gita* says :

"गुरुर एव जगत् सर्वं ब्रह्म–विष्णु–शिवात्मकम् ।
गुरोः परतरं नास्ति तस्मात् संपूजयेद् गुरुम् ।। (98)

It is with the support, guidance and blessings of the spiritual masters that all humankind is able to benefit and make strides towards a better, a happier social order.

An enlightened Guru, who is highly advanced in the spiritual path, holds on to life until he has fulfilled his mission. He can always reincarnate and resume what he could not fully accomplished in his previous birth and come back to earth. Thus Jesus Christ is credited with having re-surrected his body, after the Crucifixion, or other great masters, the power of resurrection or assuming the previous physical form is part of various legends in different cultures. Bhagawaan Gopinathji was spotted directing the military forces during the Indo-Pak War of 1947 as well as during the Kargil War. This unique feat is no wonder for Bhagawaanji, as he is spiritually alive, always and for ever, free to appear whenever he chooses, for the good of mankind; and there are numerous instances of how and when he provided succour to the needy, the deserving, the true followers, who sought his help.

The true understanding of the riddle of life is a quest that calls for sustained efforts. Sometimes, we formulate an opinion and stick to it glue-like as if it were gospel truth, without letting our mind have the freedom to evaluate, analyse or consider other view-points, which may be contrary or different. There is a legend that once a stranger came to the house of Abraham, who offered him food. When dinner was served, the stranger refused to say grace, on which Abraham lost his temper and drove him out without food. Later, God asked Abraham the reason and on Abraham's reply, God admonished him saying that He the Almighty

had been feeding this man for 50 years, knowing fully well that he did not believe in Him, while Abraham could not give him food even once. Our adherence to certain standards of behaviour which we hold sacrosanct can deprive us of a humane attitude. We need to look up to spiritual masters and learn the true answers to our questions at their feet. If the master has given up his physical body, he will still provide an answer through a clue, or a dream or some event and clear our doubts. Because the master lives on, though he may physically be absent, as the soul is eternal. Spiritual masters are present everywhere and at all times. Communicating with the master for a seeker is easy as telepathy is quick. With a speed of light, a message is transmitted and a reply sent. It only needs the one asking the question to make the first move and have full faith. All questions are answered; all doubts cleared; all issues, resolved. It only demands a clear conscience and a feeling of absolute trust. Seek the light, and it will come, ample and appropriate. Divine love is unconditioned, limitless and unalterable. One should treasure it as the most precious gift from God. Spiritual masters are the dispensers of this love; as manifestations of His will, they bestow it on the seekers.

There is another dimension of the concept of eternal life which needs to be mentioned. Apart from the immortality of the soul and the power of the spiritual master to resurrect himself and to appear in his former physical form and materialize before any chosen seeker, as and when he may like to do so, there are other beings who continue to have the same sway over the world as they had prior to their departure for the heavenly abode. They are the greats of history who have written the story of the world for its happiness and betterment through their merit and meritorious deeds, in different spheres of culture, art, literature, philosophy, science and technology, peace, universal brotherhood and spirituality. They continue to inspire and guide people, though they are long gone, through their legacy. Such people also never die and live and will continue to live for ever.

The human body is endowned with innumerable faculties, yet man, through ignorance, drowns himself in the vast ocean of fear.

One has to drive out this fear, this unreal dread, from one's heart and mind to claim one's true heritage. Guru Tegh Bahadurji has advised: "You should also remember God so you can cross the ocean of fear." The spiritual master can show the way to the seeker to defeat fear. One must pray to God to enable one to find such a master. The saints, as the *Bhagavat Puran* says, are the heart of God, and the master is a saint's true heart, as he is a favoured one and in complete unison with God. One needs to seek the freedom from fear at his lotus feet and the master is permanently and universally present to come to one's aid. In any distress, one only has to invoke his name and ask for his help and all the troubles, turbulence and ravages will quickly disappear. Such is the immense power of the master who lives by your side, that he keenly pulls you out of the morass of morbidity, despair and anguish that may have engulfed you, provided you put total trust in him and sincerely seek his benediction.

Man, created in the image of God, has inherently been blessed with godliness, with a mind that has tremendous potential for excellence in performance and he is capable of miraculous achievements, and endowed with vision, knowledge, physical and mental powers, which are almost magical. The love and compassion that he possesses and carries in his heart is so vast, extensive and powerful that it can bring the dead to life. Above all, though in due course he may give up the ghost, his soul, which is immortal, will continue to enable him to take re-birth. Only a spiritual master can rightly guide a disciple and make him know and understand Reality, so that he can spend his life in performing deeds which sublimate him and enlighten him, for the pursuit of noble values, for realization of God, and for the benefit the society and others, making his life worthwhile. The spiritual masters are there, have been and will always be there, to guide all seekers, thus benefiting all mankind. Long live the masters, as they will, as there is no going away for them. "Amar chha maraan"? No, never!

Amar Chha Maraan?

– B.N. Kaul

Once, Sri Ramakrishna, speaking about immortality, asked his dear student, Narendar Nath (later Swami Vivekananda) where he would like to sip water from a brimming cup, assuming the form of a fly. Narendra Nath replied that he would safely and securely enjoy the drink sitting on the edge of the cup without the fear of getting drowned.

But Sri Ramakrishna wanted Naren to enjoy the drink to his full satisfaction from the middle of the cup. But Naren expressed his inability to do so, as this would mean endangering his life and courting sure death in getting drowned in the midst of the water.

Sri Ramakrishna explained to Naren that the water in the cup was not ordinary liquid, but it was the infinite ocean of Sat-Chit-Anand wherein there is no death but immortal life. There is no fear of getting drowned but the prospect of only merging into the ocean of immortality.

Further, elaborating the concept of immortality, he would often give the example of a Salt-Doll and the Ocean. Once a Salt Doll ventured out to measure the depth of the ocean.

The very process of measurement involves the instrument of measurement getting dissolved in the waters of the ocean. Who is now there to report to us about the depth of the ocean? The limited identity, (name-form) *nama-rupa*, gets merged and mingled in the deep waters of the ocean.

The above illustration regarding *Jiva-atman* (*nama-rupa*) and *Brahman* (nameless, formless Reality) only points to and reinforces the Upanishadic dictum that the ultimate, fearless, deathless, ever-abiding, immortal, perfect and infinite Reality stands amidst change, a change of centre from one frame of reference to another.

Discerning and deciphering some intimations of immortal Truth in his efforts to know it, an Upanishadic sage, inspired by direct experience in his deep being, stands up before the world at large and

in reverberating tone proclaims in the words of Swami Vivekananda: "Here, ye children of immortal bliss, even ye that reside in the higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness and delusion; knowing Him alone, you shall be saved from Death over again". 'Children of immortal bliss'. What a sweet, what a hopeful, name.!

So all of us, children of immortal bliss, with this divine heritage, holy perfect beings, have to come up and shake off the delusion. We are souls immortal, spirits free, blessed and eternal. We are not bodies; matter is our servant; so where is death for the deathless, immutable, immortal *atman*?

The above-stated intimation can be deciphered in the writings of inspired people in various cultures and ways of life. These inspired people are known as Kavis, Heroes, or "Dhira Purshas" in Sanskrit literature. These people clearly perceive this immortal self beyond the world of senses, yet impinging on us occasionally through sense experiences, calling them intimations of immortality.

To make the above statement, which makes our life full of zest and joy, a spirit of inquiry is required. The spirit of a *Dhira* is needed. It is no child's play in the words of the poet, Pandit Parmananda:

गिन्दनाह छा ज़िन्द मरुन
पान रोस्त पान सोरुन
सहज व्यचार करुन

Is it child's play to die every moment in living a spiritual life which transcends the 'Nama rupa' 'Desa-kala' firmament and peep into infinite eternal verity of things, the immortal essence? Even to think of it is profound and tough!

Yet, we find sages, poets and inspired people in various parts of the world making superhuman efforts to dive deep into the fathomless ocean of Being and collecting pearls of wisdom and intimations about this immortal bliss.

Shelley, in his Adonais, catches a glimpse when he says:

"The One remains,
the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines,
Earth's shadows fly."

Wordsworth, the inspired poet, catches these intimations beyond the world of sense and death in his famous ode to the "Intimations of Immortality".

Max Born, one of the pioneers of modern quantum physics, in his book, "Restless Universe," after studying the matter and every world in depth, says:

"The scientist's urge to investigate, like the faith of the devout or the inspiration of an artist or poet, is an expression of mankind's longing for something fixed, something at rest, immutable in the universe-whirl–God, Beauty, Truth. SATYAM, SIVAM, SUNDARAM.

"Truth, Immortal, is what is aimed at. Nothing at rest, nothing enduring in this restless universe. Not everything is known, still less predictable." But still man is capable of grasping and understanding at least a part of creation; amid the "flight of phenomenon stands the immutable pole of law–immortality."

Does the Immortal Die?

Lt. Col. R.K. Langar

Immortality–what does it mean?

In common parlance immortality refers to a living being in the world who is not subject to death. Take the case of a human being who has a body with a mind or intellect and a soul or Atma. As per the Vedantic philosophy or Hinduism, when a man dies, it is only the body which perishes and not Atma which, being a fragment of God, is not subject to birth or death and is therefore immortal. Hence we can say that a man who identifies himself with the body alone and not Atma would say that when the body dies, the man dies; on the other hand, those who are soul-conscious would say that they are established in their soul or spirit and hence are immortal, because Atma is not subject to birth and death. Atma moves from one worn-out body into another new body, and this process keeps on repeating itself till the soul is liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

In a spiritual sense, immortality does not mean deathlessness of the physical body. A person having a body does die. Death is inevitable for a person who is born into this world. Immortality means that a person who has established himself in his Atma transcends both life and death. Immortality also means attainment of universality. It is freedom of the spirit above the empirical level of existence. Immortality is more of an experience in such a state. It is the remembrance of God in order to possess the Divine virtues so that man becomes God-like. God-conscious people are established in Brahman. God or Atma constantly. Another name for such a state is 'life eternal'.

Immortality and the *Bhagavad Gita*

The *Gita* talks about immortality in a number of its verses. Its main theme is that since the soul or Atma is immortal, one who has total identity with his or her essential nature, which is Atma, will realize that he is immortal, even when the body dies. It says that when one is established in Brahman and equality, which is to see others as

an extension of one's own self, one becomes perfect and gains immortality (*Gita* 5/19). It is not only a belief but an experience that the Atma within is immortal. This experience cannot be explained in words. Such an experience is based on virtue and sprouts in the words and actions of the person. A person who is established in Brahman, Atma or God has risen above worldly desire, anger, greed and the pains of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, or honour and dishonour. He gains immortality while living. The *Gita* calls such a person a *Jivanmukta* ('liberated while living in the world with a body'). This is a supreme state. Such a person sees the light of the Supreme in all and does not get caught up in externalities. In his case empirical variety does not hide the Metaphysical Reality. He looks at all, high as well as low, with an equal eye as a SAMADARSINHA (*Gita* 5/18). Another example of immortality is when a person transcends the three modes of his nature, which are goodness (Sattva), passion (Rajas) and ignorance (Tamas). He is freed from birth and death, and all kinds of sorrow. Such a person also attains immortality (*Gita* 14/20). In such cases all human bondage ends and the soul becomes free. The *Gita* also says that by knowing the Supreme Brahman who is beginningless, who is neither being (Sat) nor non-being (Asat), one attains immortality, as Brahman is above dualities. Our *Upanishads* also say that when all desires fall off with the continuous practice of yoga a man becomes immortal and attains the state of Brahman. This is the quality of the sage (*Sthita-prajna*) that is described in chapter 2 of the *Gita* (2/55).

I would emphasize again the words 'equality', and 'equal vision' referred to above. The worldly value-system is based on differences in status, in one's possessions or the caste one belongs to. But the spiritual value system is based on equality or oneness of all despite worldly differences. As one progresses in the spiritual path, one experiences more and more of oneness of all existence since the same Atma resides in all. And when you experience oneness of all existence you not only love all but you also understand the true

meaning of universal love or Divine love. Progressing in spiritual life or to becoming soul-conscious, demands both time and self-effort in filling one's inner life with divine virtues. The mind has first to be emptied of all blockage of waste thoughts and the self-created walls of differences. And then, equipped with divine virtues practising them and not only by just knowing them, at the same time you have to ensure that your intellect is strong, stable and Divinity-oriented, which does not allow your mind to work on impulses. You have to use your power of intellect so that it filters all your thoughts before these are conveyed through what you speak and what you do. Then there is complete harmony in what you think, speak and do, and such harmony shall ensure that all your actions are based on discrimination between right and wrong, and your judgement is always sound. The more you are attached to the divine and higher values of life, the more you remain detached from the world and the more you experience immortality while living in the world.

Bhagawaan Gopinathji and immortality

Bhagawaan Gopinathji, who is widely known and venerated across the globe, said that a spiritual aspirant must possess the first three virtues which are straightforwardness, or uprightness, purity of mind, and truthfulness. These virtues are the pathways to immortality which is an experience and not a belief. He categorically asked, 'Does the immortal die?' which is translated into Kashmiri as *Amar chha maran*? To experience immortality, he has advised us to live the teachings of our scriptures. Only just reading them and not practising them in life or not showing them in your conduct is of no use.

Amar Chha Maraan?
Does the immortal die?

– R.C. Shivpuri

In *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna begins His teachings to Arjuna by explaining the fundamental distinction between the temporary material body and the eternal spiritual soul. The Lord explains the process of transmigration, the nature of selfless service to the Supreme, and the characteristics of a self-realized person.

The concept of *jivan mukta*, as explained in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*:

While remaining in the body, if a person renounces identification with it, he transcends the little self and becomes aware of the true Self. Such a person, although with a body, is a liberated soul without any restrictive connection with the body. The wise say that the superimposition of desires on the Witness of the intellect deep within the body is bondage, and the destruction of desires of that superimposition by the knowledge of the universal *Atman* is liberation. The desires are not destroyed completely without the knowledge of Bhraman. When such complete destruction of desires is effected even while living in this body, that desireless one is called *Jivanmukta*, implying one who is liberated while living. The realization of the self-effulgent and blissful Atman is called liberation. If, after this realization, the body continues to live, that state is known as *jivanmukti* (embodied salvation) and the state after the destruction of this body is called *Videyhmukti* (disembodied salvation). Justice Shiv Nath Katju speaks about *Kaulatwa* attained by Bhagawaan ji.

Bhagawaan Gopi Nath ji's intense *sadhana* made him a *Kaula* of the highest order. Not only was he freed from all bondages but he had freed himself of the meshes of cause and effect that pervade the cosmos. He had become the sun of a solar system of its own; *Kauls* and *Aghoreshwars* continue to live and work from the astral plane as long as they choose to do so. It appears that after leaving his mortal

frame Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji is still guiding the destinies of people and the country

Bhagawaan Shri Krishna, in chapter 8, verse 3, of the *Bhagavad Gita* says :

Aksharam bramha parammam
Svabhavo dhyatmam muchyate
Bhuta-bhavodbhava karo
Visargah karma samgnitah

Translation:

The indestructible, transcendental living entity is called *Brahman*, and his eternal nature is called *adhyatma*, the self. Action pertaining to the development of the material bodies of the living entities is called *karma*, or fruitive actions.

Purport

Brahman is indestructible and eternally existent, and its constitution is not changed at any time. But beyond *Brahman* there is *Parambrahman*. Brahman refers to the living entity, and Parambraman refers to the supreme Personality of Godhead. The constitutional position of the living entity is different from the position it takes in the material world. In material consciousness a human being's nature is to try to be the lord of matter, but in spiritual consciousness, or God consciousness, his position is to serve the Supreme. When the living being is in material consciousness, it has to take on various bodies in the material world according to one's *karma*; there is varied creation endowed with material consciousness.

In Vedic literature, the living entity is called *jivatma* or *Brahman*, but he or she is never called *Parambrahman*. The living entity (*jivatma*) assumes different forms. Sometimes it merges into the dark material nature and identifies it with matter, and sometimes it identifies itself with the superior, spiritual nature. Therefore, man is called the Supreme Lord's marginal energy. According to his identification with material or spiritual nature, he receives a material or spiritual body. In material nature he may take a body from any of

the 84, 00,000 species of life, but in spiritual nature he has only one body. In material nature it is manifested sometimes as a man, and sometimes as demigod, or animal, beast, bird, etc., according to its *karma*. To attain the form of material heavenly planets and enjoy their facilities, he sometimes performs *yajnya*, but when his merit is exhausted he returns to the earth again in the form of man. This process is rooted in his *karma*.

The *Chandogya Upanishad* describes the Vedic sacrificial process in detail. On the sacrificial altar, five kinds of offerings are made into five kinds of fire. The five kinds of fire are conceived as the heavenly planets, clouds, the earth, man and woman, and the five kinds of sacrificial offerings are faith, the enjoyer on the moon, rain, grains and semen.

In the process of sacrifice, the living entity makes specific sacrifices to attain access to specific heavenly planets and consequently reach them. When the merit of sacrifice is exhausted, the living entity descends to the earth in the form of rain, then takes on the form of grain, and the grains are eaten by man and transformed into semen, which impregnates a woman, and thus the living entity once again attains the human form to perform sacrifice and so repeat the same cycle. In this way, the living entity perpetually comes and goes on the material path.

Verse 4 of chapter 8 of the *Bhagavad Gita* says :

Adhibhutam ksaro bhavah
Purushas chadhidaivatam
Adhiyagyo aham ebatra
Dehe deha-brtam vara

Translation

O best of embodied beings, the physical nature, which is constantly changing, is called *adhibhuta* (the material manifestation). The universal form of the Lord, which includes all the demigods, like those of the sun and moon, is called *adhidaiva*. And I, the supreme Lord, represent the Super Soul in the heart of every

embodied being, and am called *adhiyajnya* (The lord of sacrifice).

Purport

Physical nature is constantly changing. Material bodies generally pass through six stages: they are born, they grow, they remain for some duration, they produce some by-products, they dwindle and then they vanish. The physical nature is called *adhibhuta*. It is created at a certain point and will be annihilated at a certain point. The conception of the universal form of the Supreme Lord, which includes all the demigods and their different planets, is called *adhidaivata*. And present in the body, along with the individual soul, is the Super-soul, a plenary representation of God. The super soul is called Parmatma or *adhiyajnya* and is situated in the heart. The word *eva* is particularly important in the context of this verse because by its use the Lord stresses that *Parmatma* is not different from Him. The Super soul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, seated beside the individual soul, is the witness of the individual soul's activities and is the source of the soul's various types of consciousness. The Super soul gives the individual soul an opportunity to act freely and witness his activities. The functions of all these manifestations of the Supreme Lord automatically become clarified for the pure devotee of God engaged in transcendental service to the Lord. The gigantic universal form of the Lord, called *adhidaivata*, is contemplated by the neophyte who cannot approach the Supreme Lord in His manifestation as Super soul. The neophyte is advised to contemplate the universal form, or *virat-purush,* whose legs are considered the lower planets, whose eyes are considered the sun and moon, and whose head is considered the upper planetary system.

Text 5 of Chapter 8 of *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* says:

Anta-kale ch mamev smaran muktav kalevaram
Yah prayat sa mad-bhavam yati nastrayat samshay

Translation

And whosoever, at the end of his life, quits his body

remembering Me alone at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt. Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji is one of the most eminent saints of India who has the distinction of being acknowledged Bhagawaan in his lifetime. He possessed all the attributes of *a jeevan mukta*. He was in the state of *shambhavi* as *Saivites* see the Lord or what the Vedantins call *Brahmasthiti.*

Amar Chha Maraan?
Do Immortals Die?

– Dr. K L Chowdhury

This question is a contradiction in itself. Or, one could say, the question answers itself. For if immortality means deathlessness or non-dying, then immortals can't die; they are deathless. But which immortals are we speaking about? The gods who have tasted the nectar after the *amrit manthan* that was denied the *asuras* by diversion and deceit? In that case, their act was despicable and, therefore, not to be rewarded with immortality. Then whom do we call immortal, except death itself and Yamraj, the god of death? For that matter, even gods die. Krishna died from an arrow in his foot, shot by an ordinary hunter who mistook him for a deer. I feel there is a message in the story–that even a god can die from a simple injury, and that death has to come to everyone, even to a great god who straddled like a colossus guiding the outcome of the war of Mahabharata, who gave us the divine song called Gita, who revealed the *Virath Swaroopa* to Arjuna. Are we talking then of immortality in the metaphysical and metaphorical sense?

Let us begin with the beginning. Anything that takes birth has to die. This is the eternal law of nature. All living organisms take birth, pass through the stages of growth and development, and arrive at the stage of sexual maturity and reproduction, only to age, wither away, and die. In the cosmic sense, life and death are a cyclic process that goes on unabated. The seed of a plant germinates, grows into a sapling and to an adult tree that bears fruit and seed, and ages and dies, to be born again from the seed and to pass through the same cycles of life and death. That ensures continuity. Therefore, in the physical sense, at the individual level, death of an individual living organism is inevitable. But in the collective sense, there is the immortality of a species through this biological immortality.

In the true physical sense, then, I believe there is nothing like immortality, except the concept. Nor is there a potion or elixir that can

make a person immortal. If it were so, everyone would aspire to it and guard immortality like any other valued possession. That would be unsustainable unless people finally got fed up with living for ever. The quest for physical immortality has been there ever since man appeared on the earth. The Egyptian mummies are one proof; another is the recent trend at cryo-preservation of dead bodies in the hope that healing and resuscitation may be possible in the future when a cure for the diseases they die of is found. The latest experiments on longevity have homed in on to the telomere, the cap at the end of DNA, which is responsible for cell division. Normally the cells of our bodies divide and each daughter cell divides again in a continuous process. But every time a cell divides the telomere gets shorter and finally becomes so short that it is worn out and the cell dies and can't divide any longer. An enzyme called telomerase rebuilds the telomere. Now experiments are on to utilize this enzyme in longevity experiments. But longevity is not synonymous with immortality. Even as a stem cell released leads us into making organs and systems, and may finally enable us to rebuild an entire aging, mutilated, withering human being, there will be pitfalls and snares that will ensure death in one form or another.

Yet, at the mental and emotional level, people don't die when they shed their mortal coil; they continue to live in the memories of their loved ones. Others, who have created a name in the scientific, artistic, social or spiritual domain, also don't die; they live in the legacy they have left behind that inspires generations. They are immortal in the metaphorical sense. Look how beautifully Wordsworth uses memory as a link between the 'dead' past and the 'living' present, and captures his undying experience in his ode, "Intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood":

We will grieve not, rather find
strength in what remains behind;
in the primal sympathy

which having been must ever be;
in the soothing thoughts that spring
out of human suffering;
in the faith that looks through death,
in years that bring the philosophic mind.

Let us look at the issue of immortality from a scientific and rational angle. Death, which seems the end of everything, is not really so. Nothing ends for ever. The law of indestructibility of matter states that matter can neither be created nor destroyed. There may be a very small change of mass during the conversion of matter from one form into another when some energy is evolved or absorbed. However, mass and energy being inter-convertible (Einstein gave us the formula for this: $E = mc^2$), the total matter remains unchanged.

We are made up of matter–one hundred per cent. In the subtle sense, we speak of the human body made up of *panchbhutas* or the five elements, viz., earth, water, fire, air, and space. In the material sense, the body comprises the same natural elements that make up the cosmos. Ninety-nine per cent of our body is made up of oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, calcium and phosphorus, and the remaining one per cent derives from traces of scores of other elements from the periodic table including the 'precious' elements like gold. When a person dies and the body is disposed of (buried or cremated or left to the vultures), it turns into ash and gases that are made of the same elements we spoke about. It is merely a change of form. The end products mingle with the atmosphere and the soil, and are in turn reused in the creation of life. In that sense all life is immortal. It doesn't die; it becomes part of the larger cosmic whole, from where it recreates into different living organisms. The Hindu view of reincarnation of the soul or spirit that lives after death may be a metaphor of this scientific truth. That a human is the highest evolutionary form, attained after passing through eight million and four hundred thousand (eighty four lac) incarnations as different forms of life before being born as a human, is another extension of the

same truism that we all are a part of the larger cosmos. In that spirit I wrote the following ode to my revered mother captioned "Immortality" soon after she attained *nirvana* two years back. When we immersed her ashes in the holy confluence of the rivers, we saved part of it in three packets to be disposed them of later. Here is a part of the ode:

Mother,
Of the three packets of your sacred ashes,
Baiji will take one to Australia,
To immerse them in the Pacific
At the site you touched the ocean
And worshipped the rising sun
When you went visiting him.
Bodhji will immerse another
In his part of the sea
Where you loved to pray
When you stayed with him
At the California bay.
As for the third packet,
Well, I am going to mix it
With the soil of my flower beds,
Where I am planting daffodils;
Come spring, you will bloom
And smile at me as before
Eternal, immortal.

In the spiritual sense, then, that is what Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna: 'There never was a time when I did not exist, or you, or all these kings; there never will be a time when we will cease to be. As the embodied soul continuously passes in this body from childhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes from this to another body after death.' The Lord dismissed death as a mere transition, an illusion to the uninitiated mind.

The self or soul that Lord Krishna speaks about is at the root of

Hinduism. Says the Katha Upanishad: 'Beyond the senses there is the object, beyond the object there is the mind, beyond the mind there is the intellect and beyond the intellect is the Great Self.' One gets a sense of immortality when one realizes the true self as part of Brahman.

The doctrine of *Pratibhijnya* lies at the core of Shaivism, and helps our understanding of the essential tenet of Shiva philosophy. God created man in his image (says the Bible), but *Pratibhijnya* goes a step further in identifying man with Brahman, the ultimate reality, and identifying the self with Brahman. *Aham Brhamosmi* – I am Brahman; *Tat tvam asi*–'thou art that'.

That self is in the very nature of Brahman or cosmos, infinite and beyond the scope of human imagination. *Pratibhijnya* as a doctrine universalises God and man - there is a god in each one of us. We all are a part of that universal consciousness, or Brahman, which is ever present, undying, and immortal. There, then, you may have the answer to the question that has been posed–Amar chha maraan?

A Brief Assignation

– Prof. R. L. Shant

Existential philosophers had a wide influence on the literary, social and political thinking of India in the sixties and seventies of the last century. Although there were differences in the approach and methodology of these philosophers, there was a wide agreement amongst them on the contemporary human situation, man's endeavor and destiny. Almost all had it that man is condemned to be free and that making a choice in face of the basic question of existence is well nigh impossible. Freedom when faced on the intellectual plane can be painful since one cannot but be relentlessly honest to oneself. Executing honesty in word, thought and deed is easier said than done and hence it pushes one into a dilemma. A choice may look like a gift of freedom but actually it puts one to a hard test if one faces oneself with honesty. Mostly we as social animals, are governed by a herd instinct, and the society with its traditions and formalities kills our real individual self slowly and steadily. Mostly we prefer to live in the perceived collective security of convention, resisting exposure to all that is different and new. This attitude makes us dull by the day and takes away any amount of originality left in us. It is a travesty that we live most of our lives pretending to be what we are not or what we would realize we are when exposed to a testing situation. I was in a dilemma then and so I am now.

In my formative days of childhood and early adulthood, I, like thousands of others, 'enjoyed' the social and religious security which I got as a natural corollary to my birth. Again, I am not sure if I, really 'enjoyed' that since I was not conscious of that kind of enjoyment. A situation was given to me and I acted and reacted to the same as per my base human behaviour. Like thousands, I was a Kashmiri and a Hindu. That was given. I was born into a family with a given social and economic status. I got my school and college within the given social conditions. All through unforeseen and directionless games of life, games of arbitrary placements, fittings and substitutions

continued throwing, tossing, kicking, settling and unsettling me with almost no conscious participation in them. I went to temples and joined my voice with others in the collective prayers, because I saw others of my ilk doing so. I lost interest in one living saint and thronged the congregations of another because I watched and followed what a friend, a classfellow or just an unknown playmate in the vicinity was doing. My mother directed me to one godly man while I did not know that there was a more popular one living nearby. I got in contact with one group of classmates bent towards Marxism; I protested because I had got initiated into ideas opposed to the same. Later, I became a staunch socialist because many of my classmates and friends were so. All this kept on happening in spite of myself. I will not accept the blame that all through the journey, trying and adopting, I was too immature to grasp ideas and make my own decisions. I was as immature as kids and boys of my times and as mature as anybody in the centre of chance currents and influences can be. In fact, I give myself the credit of letting myself be fully exposed to all ideas which came my way. I did not shun an idea in my first introduction to it. Also, I did not stick to a thought just for its exoticism.

And that brings me to the theme of this write-up. I was born and brought up in the Badiyar neighbourhood of the city of Srinagar, which is just a few hundred yards away from Gadood Bagh, Sathu Burbur Shah, Srinagar, where the popular and revered saintly person, Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji, stayed for quite some time, meditated and preached. His lifestyle was simple and his language was uncomplicated. Simplicity and devotion to God were his hall-marks. Granted that boys do not know or need not know of things beyond the immediate world facing them. Even then they cannot remain uninfluenced by the tide of things. I took part actively in some group activities in the vicinity of Kharyar, but it so happened that I never heard of and never chanced to know of this great sage. I did so only here in Jammu while in exile. I was surprised to see people thronging

his Ashrams, remembering his grace and celebrating days in memory of him. His *bhaktas* recall events of his life, wherever and in whatever situation they be. That is indeed impressive.

Bhagawaanji passed away in Srinagar in the sixties of the last century. I have heard of miracles performed by him when he was alive. I have also heard of some inexplicable happenings ostensibly for the good of the devotees, even after he was no more. Such things are attributed to the immortal Bhagawaanjee. Now he is believed to have joined the galaxy of immortal gods, whose souls hover over this mortal world. They are believed to be easing their devotees out of difficult situations. Such phenomena of the immortals, the 'divinely' graced people, are widely believed to be happening all over among all believers in all faiths–be he Christ or Mohammad, Nanak, Ram or Krishna. Originally, they were all historical persons, deified by their followers as desired or permitted by them or according to the tenets of the faiths they established, propounded, or propagated. Their word was a divine wish and their action an example when they lived. There is no difference in the effect of the divine wish even when the wishers are not around. There is a degree of difference in the status of the gods or prophets among the believers. While in some faiths the historicity of prophets was researched into so as to prove their superhumanness, in others they are above worldly definitions characterized by history and geography, in spite of their downright humanness. In the latter they are eternal. They were there when the world, even the cosmos, began. They are God incarnate. Both those who believe in the reincarnation of soul and those who do not, practically make their sages and prophets into divinities and divinities into gods, almost God Himself. A small but significant contradiction arises at this stage for a less discerning person like me...

Of course, all the above-mentioned faiths have it that Almighty God as a singular-central-core-essential-immortal entity was there before there was anything and He brought this cosmos about. In fact, His will was there even before He was there. He willed to be. He is

self-creating, self-preserving and self-destroying, not to speak of His power to create, preserve and destroy the cosmos. So far none of these acts has possibly been human. In fact, these attributes define human limits more than they do human endeavor to cross those limits. Hence the contradiction pointed above.

I am no scholar, no philosopher. Study of religion or philosophy is not my domain. Usually because of the paucity of time, I avoid contemplating such questions, even though , I concede, I cannot always close my eyes to them. However, the fact remains that life is so fragile and man is such a weak thing that he needs one or the other support, physical or moral; real or imaginary, to come over problems and to keep his body and soul together. At least, I know I am very ordinary, weak and wanting in many things which I know I may never have. Yet my desire for life is not something extraordinary. I exhaust most of myself existing and trying to give some meaning to my existence. It is in this context that I need something, some idea or somebody stronger or above the ordinary, for me to cling to. I am ready to call that thing a god or even God. I may not be like those who love a god or God in absolute terms, whether or not He is, He owns them or listens to them or loves them, in turn. They define Him as absolute Love. But love is undemanding. Hence they live unto themselves. They may be extraordinary! Like their God.

I tend to connect to some idea of godhood through the medium of my limited understanding of man's behaviour in the world. I think that if nothing, godhood should certainly have something to do with love, compassion, benevolence, empathy and mercy. No philosophy in this. Simply, if God creates this universe, He preserves it too before He lets it be subject to some big change. So any act to promote His design is divine. Those who help this design to be realized are divine and godly . Others who cannot, do not or do not know how to promote or subscribe to godly actions, in short, those who are takers only and have nothing to give, also have to face problems as they live. They think in terms of simple analogies, through their understanding

of what goes on around them. God's mercy for them is apparently a bigger edition, an extension, of the mercy of His 'chosen' ones , the worldly saints. In certain cases the converse of this supposition is true. It is His kindness that extends to His men. What we as ordinary beings see is the love or benevolence of these 'godly' men . Routinely, we draw similar conclusions as and when we think of something merciful or benevolent happening to us. Sometimes we think that we are getting more than we would expect . We simply trace this act of an unexpected bliss to God Almighty. Simple logic is at work with us. Saints bless us with good wishes while they are alive. Their souls watch our welfare even after they are physically no more. Their souls are 'immortal', so they can always be propitiated and requested 'to guide' us,' to come to our succour, and pull us out of difficulties.

With this I wish to bring this small essay to a close. I know I may have been irrelevant or repetitive in my loud thinking. I confess that I have very little bookish knowledge except what I might have learnt from a limited exposure to the world. What I do is to find words for what I feel and think. My vocabulary too is small. So I call it off. My brief assignation with my experience ends.

Amar Chha Maraan

– Manohar Trakroo

Ancient learning and wisdom have travelled through waves of time ever since human beings made their appearance on earth. In the beginning, in the pre-historic era, this knowledge would be rudimentary, mainly experiences relating to day-to-day activities and sheer survival techniques. These were passed on from generation to generation. Gradually, with fresh ideas, new thinking and newer concepts about life, combined with mental development, man's experience came to take on more complex and advanced forms. But it took centuries more before man became so evolved as to sit up and begin asking about existence itself: Who am I? Why am I here? The complexion and nature of human enquiry kept changing, thinking got more regimented and all these developments eventually morphed into today's major religions with mass following.

In India, on the other hand, Hindu thought took a different route and was much ahead, especially in the basic quest for truth about man's identity and purpose. Thinkers of the time adopted a calculated process of slow and deep introspection rather than looking for some supernatural elements for answers or for some divine revelation. Thus, while elsewhere in the world man was muddling through amidst claims about 'God told me this' or 'God did that', Indian religious philosophy and teachings, in various forms, reached the pinnacles of intellectual brilliance based purely on reflection and contemplation.

India was thus in a position to give the world the highly sophisticated concepts of cosmology, mysticism and other ideas which set out a new path for the enquiring minds everywhere. The Hindu religion, as also its different off-shoots like Jain philosophy, Buddhist teachings and similar other segments, with Hinduism at the root, has the singular characteristic of searching for truth about human identity and reality rather than looking for divine intervention to gain material pleasures of life and other favours. Unlike most other

religions where the worshipper pleads before the Almighty for power, prosperity and glory, the Hindu prayer seeks light, truth and immortality in the form of Moksha :

Om asato maa satgamaya
Tamaso maa jyotir gamaya
Mrityor maa amritam gamaya
Lead us from the unreal to the Real
From darkness to Light
From death to Immortality.

The 'immortality' prayed for here is a highly refined and complex spiritual concept that our sages enunciated as the liberation brought by *Moksha*, the release from a life of bondage and pain that revolves round an endless cycle of birth and rebirth. Totally unconnected with time in years, months, decades and other such measures governed by the calendar, the Hindu concept of immortality, explained in detail in the *Bhagavad Gita*, denotes *timelessness*, rather than *time* as such. Like the timeless quest for truth and enlightenment, an unending journey through a great ocean that lies undiscovered before man. Great scholars and saints measure 'immortality' in terms of truth, love and compassion – for none of which is there any yardstick. It is far removed from 'prolongation' of life' that today's human being may get with an injection developed in a scientific laboratory.

First step towards enlightenment

Immortality, *Moksha*, is thus an extremely subtle concept, so elusive and abstract that merely understanding its true meaning, no easy task, is considered the first step towards spiritual awakening. It is like the first glimpse of light after a lifetime in a dark cave.

One such glimpse of bright light for his devotees is the sum-total of Jagadguru Bhagawaan Gopinathji's teachings. His questioning remark: 'AMAR CHHA MARAAN'? - Does the immortal die?' sounds simple but alludes to a highly complex concept and spiritual, abstract ideas and not to any physical form. After all his own physical

form is no longer with us for the simple reason that no physical form, howsoever, exalted the personage, is everlasting. What is everlasting, undying and imperishable are his teachings, thoughts, deeds, guidance, advice and a thousand other little remarks that he made while talking to his disciples every day of his ascetic life. These teachings and thoughts have outlasted his worldly life and will last forever. If his physical frame was an illusion, the spiritual part of his life and what he taught are the reality; they are immortal, and will always remain immortal.

Path of Salvation

Amar teachings of eternal worth and validity left behind by Bhagawaanji provide a bridge to connect man to his God. But establishing the connection can be a long and slow process, gradual like a dark night turning into a bright day which happens only in slow phases from deep darkness to pre-dawn, dawn and only then the sunrise.

Gurus like Bhagawaan Gopinathji provide to *saadaks*, devotees, a spark, and this, broadly speaking, they do through simple teachings which are immanent and imperishable. Even to receive this spark is a privilege the Guru bestows only on the few he considers worthy. After that, it is the devotee who has to convert the spark into a flame that will light his path, and also the path of anyone else who may desire to go along. It was his Dharma, as a saint who had achieved the pinnacle of spirituality, to provide the spark to those seeking enlightenment. After that the devotee is left to his own devices, and only with intense *sadhna* can he look for supreme consciousness and reach higher and still higher states of tranquillity and ecstasy when only the mind exists as an *Amar* entity. Some of his devotees have no doubt tried to convert that spark into a flame and the results are there for all to see.

This flame ignited by a Guru's spark lights the path of Dharma. It helps in observing *Sezar* and *Shozar*, two pithy little words of simple advice that were always on Bhagawaanji's lips, stressing the virtues that he enjoined upon his disciples to observe as a salutary motto to

live a pious life. How many do that is also there for all to see.

Bhagawaanji's own guru, as reportedly disclosed by him, was none other than the *Bhagavad Gita*, another *amar* pillar in Hindu philosophy. Coming almost as the culmination of the tangled state of human mind, it calmed troubled souls, cleared confusion and illumined the path of thinkers. These teachings impacted the wise and perceptive thinkers everywhere, as did the other *amar* pillar, the *Upanishads* as well.

The world Picked up the clues

Hindu philosophy and the precepts of its saints and sages shed a great deal of light to indicate the pathways towards salvation and truth–highly impressive but also mind-boggling for ordinary people. Internationally respected western intellectuals and thinkers grasped the clues in the propositions in various Hindu texts like the *Upanishads*, the *Vedas* and the *Gita* and admitted that the sages of India had succeeded in recognising Truth. The German philospher, Arthur Schopenhauer, a renowned original thinker, was so deeply impressed by the *Upanishads* that he called them "the production of the highest human wisdom." He said they contain superhuman concepts. So much did he venerate the *Upanishads* particularly, another *amar*, that he had the book lying open on his desk and invariably studied it before going to bed at night.

Contrast: Evil too is immortal

If one may get out of step with this line of thought and reflect on practical aspects of today's life, it is also noteworthy that along with the Dervish came the Demon too. Thus has come in prolonged strife over religious, sectarian and other causes. Amidst man's flights of intellectual, spiritual brilliance, a multitude of undesirable features crept into society and many evils in various forms surround us. All these negative forces can, in a twisted manner of speaking, also claim 'immortal' status because these are as old as man himself and show no sign of ever dying! Undesirable influences like greed, envy, cheating, ignorance, superstition and trivial rituals–like the seven cardinal sins

listed in Christianity – these negative forces prove a major hurdle at every step in the path of those seeking spiritual progress. These influences pull down any individual; they can be deadly for spiritual seekers and might effectively hamper their progress.

The tragedy for today's world is that most people are engulfed by these, latter, 'immortal' influences and the genuinely *amar* concepts and teachings, like those bequeathed to us by our saints, are mostly confined to sheer academic pursuits!

"Does the Immortal Die?" – Bhagawaan Gopinathji

– Swami Nirantarananda

Bharatavarsha is a land of gods and goddesses, of saints and sages. Here people are looked upon as God Himself in different forms. At the crown there lies the majestic Himalaya with its snow-clad peaks; it reminds us of Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is always in his benign form bestowing blessings on all people of the land of Bharata. One of the most favourite seats of Lord Shiva is Kashmir. Here Sri Amarnathji, the Lord of immortality, resides from the time beyond. Every year lakhs of pilgrims come here and visit the holy cave and worship the Lord. After the long and strenuous pilgrimage, when they return home, they look serene and highly composed. Pilgrims return with smiles on their faces and with their hearts full of peace, bliss, power and hope.

But the greatest blessing a devotee receives from Sri Amarnathji is the knowledge of immortality. He/She begins to see the life beyond death. Bhagawaan Gopinathji, a well-known saint of Kashmir enshrined in the hearts of many devotees, received the aforesaid blessing. About a month and a half before his final departure from this world, a devotee came to see him and felt pained in the heart when he saw the poor physical condition of Gopinathji. And the thought that Gopinathji was on the verge of death crossed his mind. Gopinathji read his mind and asked him immediately the question; "Amar chha maraan? (Does the immortal die?)". It indicates that Bhagawaan Gopinathji realized the free nature of Atman. By the knowledge of Atman one goes beyond both birth and death.

Let me describe here the wonderful experience Swami Vivekananda had when he entered the holy cave of great God, Lord Shiva, and offered his worship to Lord Amarnathji, for it will be another testimony to the truth Bhagawaan Gopinathji and many other saints realized.

It was towards the end of the month of July 1898. Swami Vivekananda, accompanied by some of his western disciples, came to

Kashmir to visit the towns, villages, temples and holy places, beautiful lakes, and the greens surrounded by the snow-peaked hills of Kashmir. On the way to Amarnath he reached Pahalgam on July 28. Swamiji allowed only Sister Nivedita from the group of companions, his spiritual daughter, to accompany him up to Amarnath. Both of them reached Panchtarani with a large group of other pilgrims on August 2. Swamiji and the other Sadhus and devotees bathed in all the five streams and proceeded further in wet clothes, one after another. After this, Swamiji was seen lagging behind the crowd, 'perhaps intentionally, so as to be alone to his thoughts'. When he entered the cave, 'his whole body was shaking with emotion'. 'His body', says the biography, 'covered with ashes, his face aflame with devotion to Shiva, the Swami entered the shrine itself, nude except for a loin-cloth, and prostrated in adoration before the Lord'. 'A profound mystical experience came to him, ...' But Swamiji never spoke about this experience –exactly what he had. Maybe there exists no adequate language to describe the ecstatic state of Swamiji's mind in the moment of deep silence. He said only on an occasion that Shiva Himself had appeared before him, and that he (the Swami) had been granted the grace of Amarnath, the Lord of Immortality, namely, not to die until he himself should choose to do so.

We are surprised to find the fulfilment of the boon gifted by Lord Shiva in Swamiji's life after four years only. Swamiji attained Mahasamadhi on 4 July, 1902. A few days before, Sister Nivedita visited Swamiji at Belur Math, West Bengal, on 29 June (Sunday). That happened to be her last visit to Swamiji in the world of ours. She had a long conversation with Swamiji that day on various topics. Swamiji said to her in the midst of the conversation, 'A great Tapasya and meditation has come upon me, and I am making ready for death!' Swamiji had known well in advance that his end was nearing. Three days before his passing away, Swamiji, while walking with his brother- disciple, Swami Premananda, in the newly started monastery at Belur Math, said to the brother-disciple pointing to a particular spot

on the bank of the Ganga, 'When I give up the body, cremate it there!' On that very spot stands today a temple in his honour.

Four years before, when Swamiji had been in Kashmir for quite a long period, he made a remark which was significantly connected with his death. Swamiji lifted a couple of pebbles with his hands and started telling the people present around him, 'Whenever death approaches me, all weakness vanishes. I have neither fear, nor doubt, nor thought of the external. I simply busy myself making ready to die. I am as hard as that'– he struck the pebbles with one another, – 'for I have touched the Feet of God'.

Though dreams are mostly the products of one's own imagination, some of them are seen to be true. Swamiji's brother-disciple, Swami Ramakrishnanandaji, in Chennai, in a dream on the night of 4 July, 1902, the day of Swamiji's passing away, saw Swamiji. Swamiji said to him in the dream, 'Look here, Shashi (Swami Ramakrishnanandaji's pre-monastic name), I threw this body like spitting out spittle.' Ramakrishnanandaji saw again that Swamiji spat twice or thrice before he disappeared.

Swamiji came to know his real divine nature before his passing away. It is confirmed by a prophecy made by Sri Ramakrishna long before, when Swamiji started visiting Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna said, 'When he (Naren) realizes who and what he is, he will no longer remain in the body'!

Swamiji preached this Vedantic doctrine, immortality of the soul, for his entire life all over the world. According to him, man is not only immortal but also divine. That is why he stated very poetically, 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest the divinity already in man.' In a letter to Sister Nivedita, Swamiji wrote, 'My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life'. Across the world, he travelled and promulgated the ideals and ideas of Vedanta to one and all. He believed the world would be immensely benefitted by Vedanta philosophy and religion.

He said in a lecture entitled 'The Mission of the Vedanta', 'Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self - conscious activity."

The source of these life-giving, man-making and character - building ideas is actually, as Swamiji himself said, our holy ancient scriptures–the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Ramayana Mahabharata* and other books.

In many of the Upanishadic passages, it is clearly stated that man is by nature Brahman. He is great and birthless soul. He has neither decrepitude nor death, but he is immortal and fearless.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Lord Sri Krishna taught Arjuna, who was suffering from sorrow and delusion, the teaching of the deathlessness of man. There Bhagawaan said, 'Weapons do not cut it (Atman), fire does not bum it, water also does not moisten it, and wind does not dry it.'

The profound science of soul is the most unique feature of Indian religious culture. It is clearly elucidated in our sacred books, the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, which are said to be the most ancient literature of the world. Even today in India, a sincere seeker for Truth will certainly be blessed to have the holy *darshana* of saints and sages who are ready to meet death every moment.

In *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* there is a story. Maitreyi, one of the two wives of the sage Yajnavalkya, refused to receive her share of material property from her husband, who wanted to give away all his wealth to his two wives and then to become a mendicant. Thus follows the interesting dialogue:

Yajnavalkya: Maitreyi, my dear! I am going to renounce this life. Allow me to settle finally with both of you.

Maitreyi: Sir, if indeed this whole earth full of wealth be mine, shall I be immortal through that?

Y: No, your life will be just like that of the people who have

plenty of things, but there is no hope of immortality through wealth.

M: What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal? Tell me, sir, of that alone which you know (to be the only means of immortality).

Y: My dear, you have been my beloved (even before), and you say what is after my heart. Come, take your seat, I will explain it to you.

And then the Upanishad expounds, through *Yajnavalkya*, the means by which one can go beyond death.

Another very popular Upanishad, the *Katha Upanishad*, describes a story of a little boy who was tremendously heroic by nature. The boy named Nachiketa, absolutely free from fear met Yama, the god of death, learnt from him the Atamvidya, the science of Atman.

All our scriptures explain that the real nature of every man or woman is Atman. Atman is pure consciousness, eternal and one without a second. It is beyond birth and death, good and evil, pain and pleasure. But it is Knowledge, Existence, Bliss Absolute. It exists everywhere. Atman is neither body nor mind. 'By knowing That alone one attains immortality.'

In modem times, Sri Ramakrishna was another living example to demonstrate this truth to the world. After Sri Ramakrishna passed away, when his wife, Sri Maa Sarada Devi (Holy mother) was about to take off the ornaments she had on, Sri Ramakrishna appeared before her and said, 'What are you doing? Have I been dead? It is like passing from one room to another.' Holy mother understood the meaning of this event and did not wear for her whole life the signs of a widow.

In conclusion, the message of all the great saints of India for all humanity is again repeated. The aim of human life, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is God-realization. And *Chandogya Upanishad* states that a person goes beyond all sorrows through the knowledge of Atman, '*tarati shokam aatmavit*'. It will bring you not only this, but

also immortality; that is, '*one goes beyond the chain of birth and death*', *The Bhagavad Gita*, VIII. 16)

We, common people, will be blessed by the attainment of the science of Atman only when we approach the saints who are ready to teach us. We must listen to saints like Bhagawaan Gopinathji, Sri Ramakrishna and others and then we should lead our life according to the teachings of these saints. In this Kaliyuga, one of the most effective as well as practicable spiritual practices for the householder-devotees living in a modern society of ours is *Sevayoga* with the attitude, '*service to man is worship to God*,' imparted by Sri Ramakrishna.

Do Immortals Die?

(Amar Chha Maraan?) --- A Spiritual SMS

– Pradeep Kaul Khudballi

Sounds commonplace and fairly prosaic--Amar Chha Maraan? It is a short, miniature statement. Could be given by a commoner too, and that, not necessarily in some particular context. This short statement in itself is fraught with risks and ramifications when analysed on the touchstone of ordinary linguistics. 'Amar Chha Maraan' has two connotations: one in singular parlance, meaning a particular person who has attained immortality does not die. The second connotation relates to a plural context, pointing to many people who have attained immortality and do not die. In both cases the common posit relates to people who are immortal, and so do not die. Perceived in a general context, again sounds very palpable. This declaration can be attributed to any ordinary person, hence not a big deal at that.

Then why so much strenuous effort on a short cryptic statement, which is very obvious and does not need a huge exertion whether spiritual or earthly to utter? Those who are Amar (Immortal) do not die. So what, did Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji (SBG) say something special which sounds so trite and banal in the first instance. Naturally those who are immortal–how will they die? Hence it does not merit even a reaffirmation. It may seize the attention of serious scholars but in the end they surely could find a dead end, because the person who uttered these words could not be bound by usual niceties of semantics. But logic has to be somewhere incorporated in the scheme of explanation. After all, here is an utterance which is sought to be believed to be of great supernal import, has to be stretched like a small deflated, flaccid balloon into a huge colourful, expanded one when gas is pumped into it. Rising high over the landscape, it arrests the attention of many who see it. Wow, in wonder and excitation, a small finger sized rubber material gets transformed into a vibrant balloon grabbing attention of

everyone!

Hence the logic part will always be there whenever a sentence comprising three words is being explained in a particular context. Expressively, the exposition of Amar Chha Maraan? might have severe risks of falling into the same trap of usual pedantic and boring exposition. The gratifying factor in this tedious job is the sole support that it has been uttered by Bhagawaanji himself after coming out of a long trance. That perhaps makes it special as well as heartening for the poor unlettered person like your author to bank upon. Trance is said to be a state in which a person given to spiritual ways loses the cognition of his outward cognizance. He withdraws inwards, wherein his consciousness expands at the cost of objective awareness. In this deep state, the seeker is in tune with his inner reality and when he wishes to come out of the trance, the change in his physical appearance becomes evident. He gets more attractive with *taej* (radiance) on his face and a renewed vocabulary on his lips. 'Amar Chha Maraan' is perhaps representative and reflective of the influence of a deep state of trance that Bhagawaanji experienced. It is here that the three-word sentence gets transformed from an ordinary utterance into an extraordinary aphorism. It has happened with almost all great and liberated souls. Ramana Maharishi, Ramakrishna Parmhamsa, Yogi the Avtar Baba Ji or Swami Sri Ramji –all have experienced this transition from the ordinary to the amazing. Bhagawaanji, too must have experienced this deep state of realization and thus came forth the three-letter sentence which has now taken the form of an aphorism. Interesting – how an ordinary sentence assumes significance when attributed to an extraordinary man! Aphorisms are common in divine literature. The nearest translation in Sanskrit is a Sutra. Pregnant with meaning due to the crystallization of personal experience on each word of the Sutra by the experience of the seeker (Saadak) it attains a different and higher significance. 'Amar Cha Maraan' is just like a Sutra which is pregnant with some special experience of a saint who very seldom

spoke. When silence is enforced with a purpose and the Yogi draws himself inwards and after a long spell he opens his eyes, something special, though sounding commonplace, issues forth. Ponder hard on it and you realize the unfathomable depth of spiritual experience in it.

Bhagawaanji in his introvert nature did not shun the responsibility that a realised soul has towards his disciples. He always craved to see spiritual uplift in them. But not given to too much talking he, for the sake of his disciples, chose the vehicle of Sutra form to make them ponder over the purpose of life and thus to instil in them a voluntary desire to reach that level where they get free from bondage and embrace eternity. 'Amar chha maraan?' points towards that in right earnest.

Having said so, it is not yet within bounds of people like us who have no experience of trance-state to explain what Bhagawaanji could have felt in his state of deep thought. Here are some seemingly knotty situations to explain what he said and how he felt when something special stirred his mind. Established that a sutra is the consolidation of a hugely uncommon or philosophical knowledge crystallized into some words, but that does not make the job of its commentator light. Otherwise, the commentator ought to be a Kshemraja who understood what his great Master Sri Abhinavgupta said or nearly meant. In the follow-up of Bhagawaanji's declaration 'Amar Chha Maraan?' with his disciples who were in awe of his introvert nature or did not venture to ask him as Swami Vivekananda nudged Sri Rama Krishna many times. Conceded that Bhagawaanji's disciples could not be compared to Vivekananda, but as we know from the writings of his biographer, S N Fotedar, there was not a sustained effort to stimulate Bhagawaanji to a discussion or explanation of what he said many times. Perhaps, to be fair to them, they were a bunch of great devotees who beheld a visual spiritual feast when an unusual saint of his standing seldom spoke. Their attention might have rested on their Master's murmurings and gestures, so were not in a position to create an atmosphere of debate

and inquiry which desirably should have happened.

Immortality (Amrita) is the theme that has made the vital difference between Indian and western philosophy. Rather it is one of the prime differences between the two philosophies. In Indian context, immortality is the final aim of life. Brihadarankaya Upanisad says with emphasis. 'From death lead me to immortality' (*Mritu ma amaritamgamaya*). To seek immortality, the seeker has to believe in life after life. Laughing at this belief, some western philosophers derided this notion outright. Life after life is not possible; whatever there is, it is in this world, so enjoy this life and do not waste time on the idea of a life beyond death, which at best is a mere conjecture. This is the common refrain. Now things are beginning to change, as biologists all over the world are seriously researching on the plausibility of a life after life. The impetus came from the repeated cases of children proclaiming their memories about their previous lives. Many turned out to be fake but some special cases still whip the imagination of scientists. In the late seventies of the last century Dr. Raymond Mody wrote his famous book, *Life after Life*, in which he narrated the experiences of those patients who were declared clinically dead but who came back to life after some time. Yet doubts persist with many western philosophers. There is a school of Indian philosophy that veers round a materialist view of life with as much emphasis as a communist diehard would do in Mao's China or Stalin's Russia. The Charvaks, who form a philosophical school in India, are materialists to the core and have rejected the very concept of Immortality.

As philosophy progressed, the conceptual framework of its basis got changed with man getting increasingly disillusioned with life itself. Imagine the great Bharatahari, King of Ujjain, renouncing his empire; he finally sought refuge in a forest to compose his three hundred gems of Sanskrit verses (*Shatak Triyi*). A verse from his collection will throw some light on the magnitude of cravings in man for something more in life than only the focus on the mundane

which either turns out to be fleeting or painful.

I failed to fix my aimless thoughts on Shiva's
Holy foot to cleave these mundane bonds
I heedlessly shunned the righteous way
Which penetrates heaven's massive doors
I lived the life like an axe, wasting
The forest of youth my mother slaved to nurture

The craving for heaven which points to immortality runs so deep in these touching lines. Seven hundred years before him, Buddha renounced his worldly possessions, wife and children to seek answers for the root cause of pain and suffering. Attachment and ego, the two powerful enemies of man's spiritual progress, tear him asunder continuously. Bhagawaanji in his Sutra 'Amar Chha Maraan?' perhaps makes a veiled reference to the futility of the purely worldly life that we mortals live and hence tells us in brief words to change our ways and gain immortality.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita lays emphasis on making (and us) Arjuna realize the essence of positive living. Taking hold of his despondency, Sri Krishna guides us about Jnana, Karma, Dhyana and Bhakti which finally lead to Moksha. What a great spiritual dialogue, most suited for a seeker like Arjuna who, now cleansed of all attachment, takes to fighting the evil with all earnestness and grit. The Gita has remained the guiding book of almost all spiritual persons that have adorned the country ever since it was compiled by Risi Vyasa, forming chapters 25-42 of Bhishma Parva of the *Mahabharata*.

How could the silent yogi, Sri Bhagawaanji, go without the nectar of the Gita. It formed the bedrock of his spiritual edifice and he always drew upon its infinite purport to guide himself in his journey which, to use a Drawinian phrase, was nothing but the Ascent of Man. Drawing from the Gita was his wont, his sole refuge, and he always drew inspiration from it. No matter how much we debate and discuss the countless dimensions of the Gita, it is

essentially the culmination of a grand exposition of Indian philosophy. The Gita was a mirror for Bhagawaan Gopinathji. He would, in a few of his outward mutterings, quote the Gita which forms the last leg of *Prasthan-Trayi*, the other two being the Upanishads and the Brahma–Sutras. Seen in the context of Srimad Bhagvad Gita, the short utterance of 'Amar Chha Maraan?' finds an echo in Krishna's discourse. Who can be a prospective candidate for immortality? This question is very clearly dealt with in the Gita. Chapter II on Sankhya Yoga, verse 38, lays a broad framework on this matter as Sri Krishna clearly delineates the basic necessities for an aspirant to immortality.

Sukh dukhae same kritva
Labha labhau jaya jay
Tato yuddhaya yuj asva
Navam papam avapsi

"When pain and pleasure, loss and gain, victory and defeat become equal in your vision, then engaging in battle you (Arjuna) shall acquire no sin".

Alluding to this very fundamental premise, Bhagawaan Gopinathji gave a mantra for moving ahead on the road to immortality. Here, he is working on the psyche of human beings. To wean away a child from some pranks and naughty actions, he is offered candy or chocolate. The same way Bhagawaan Jee for showering *kripa* and *Anugrah* (Grace) on his disciples gives a Sutra - form candy 'Amar Chha Maraan'? Admonishing them, he says, "Look! try to become immortal and it means you won't die at all". It has a very special connotation as well which is very aptly put forth by Lal Ded in one of her great *Vakhs*. It deals with another aspect of immortality where an aspirant does not need to wait for physical death until he attains immortality. She alludes to yet another great possibility and that is to die before death. Abstruse and vague at first, but we delve a bit deeper, we begin to understand She in her own grand imaginative way explains:-

Lal bu drayas suman bagh baras
Vuchhum Shivas Shakti meelith te kya
Lai karmas vaches amrit saras
Zinday maras te mei kari kya?

"I, Lala, went to the gate of the flower garden,
Beheld Shiva with His Shakti united in one;
Fixed inwards, I reached the pool of nectar.
Alive shall I die and who shall dare touch me?"

Lal Ded, in this verse, makes one cardinal point, so essential for those who desire to tread upon the path of immortality. Her expression '*zinday marun*' makes it amply clear. It is to die while living in this world so that you throw the gates of eternity open for you. As a doting father, Bhagawaan Gopinathji yet again defines this very central theme that Lal Ded has so exquisitely defined. Telling his disciples to attain immortality, he in his own mysterious way has thrown out an open invitation to one and all. But one rider is added. Die while you are alive. Remove slowly all your worldly garments of *Kam*, *Krodh Moh* and *Ahankaar*; then nobody shall obstruct your path to higher realms.

Kena Upanisad, while dealing with immortality, very tersely reflects upon what Bhagawaanji sought to transmit with his aphorism, where he probably wanted to underline the relation between the gradual ascension to *Amrita* (II.4):

Pratibodh viditam matamamrittatvam hi vinditey
Aatmanam vinditeyviryam viryam vidhayam vinditeyamritam

"It (Brahman) is really known when known through one's own consciousness. Thereby one gets immortality. Through one's own self is acquired strength and through knowledge is attained immortality".

There are many instances when Bhagawaan Gopinathji expressing anger over the bad conduct of those who visited him as a matter of curiosity. According to S N Fotedar, who wrote a biography

on him, says that a woman once visited him. So upset was he that he chased her out of his house. When asked why he had taken such an unusual stance, he replied that the wretched woman had come after indulging in a bad deed. He wished people to remain above board and raise the level of their character to a higher pedestal. He believed this to be very important for achieving what has been repeatedly mentioned as the Ascent of Man.

When perceived in both contexts, spiritual and temporal, Bhagawaan Ji's Sutra style or speech is both inscrutable and profound; inscrutable, because it leaves us with no clue to rely upon in order to make head or tail of it; and profound, because it emanated from one of the most influential saints of the recent past. Leave aside the grand Ashrams which hold his life-size statues. Leave aside the crowd that throngs these places. There is something more special which permeates the mind of the beholder when he sees or reads about Bhagawaan Gopinathji even for the first time. Has he not, in his own way, bestowed upon us the small but intense sprinkling of a fleeting *Amrita* when we see unending crowds surging in his Ashrams with devotion and faith? Faith is indeed one principal pillar on which the whole philosophical plank of immortality stands. Perhaps he desires to infuse the leaven of faith into our conscience so that we attain to a higher level, then to yet another one, and so on, we go flying higher on the wings of knowledge and detachment. Looking below, we realize, when liberated from the shackles of our own making, that really those who turn immortal do not die.

Not learned in the ordinary sense of the word, Bhagawaanji had attained his unusual powers through nothing but pure divine grace which in Shaivite terminology is called *Shaktipaat*.

It is a form of special *anugraha* (grace) which a guru bestows on a rare disciple. The wise say that Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, Ramtirtha and Swami Mehtab Kak had received *shaktipaat* from their gurus. Bhagawaan Gopinathji too falls in the

same league. It is about such unusual persons that one of the greatest philosophers, Acharya Utpaldeva, says in his celebrated work, *Shivastrotavali*, canto 1, verse I:

Na dyato na japta siyatas avidi purvakam
aemev Shiva basatam namo bhaktishalinam
"To those I bow who without any dhyana,
tapa or traditional initiation
see Shiva everywhere".

In a proper philosophical context and discourse, 'Amar chha maraan?' might look germane on the surface. But go deeper and ponder, and the peals of the onion start unravelling one after the other. Bhagawaan Ji wanted to send multiple messages through this short spiritual SMS. With the cell phone of his intense purity, he wants us to hear the infinite dial tones of his famous dictum. True, immortals do not die; but how they attain to such a stage is what Bhagawaan Ji seems concerned about. It is for us all who are influenced by his example to introspect on what he said. Mere ritual and boring routine will not help in any way. Practical steps have to be taken to close the gap between our thoughts and deeds, between our belief and practices. The guru element of Bhagawaan ji is always with us provided we make sincere efforts to rise from the levels of decadence, duplicity and despondency and make ourselves better human beings. In all fairness to his life, which was full of so many events ranging from ordinary to extraordinary, he never lost his focus on truth, purity and non-attachment–verily, the three ingredients that make the difference between spiritual ascent and fall.

Om Shri Gurvey Namah

Thus Spake Bhagawaanji :

Amar Chha Maraan

'Does the Immortal Die?'

– Anand Swami Pran Nath Bhat 'Gareeb' Bhaiji'

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषित मारुतः।।

Bhagawaan Ji, the spiritual Guru of the highest order (Jagat Guru), said: "Soul does not perish or die," while His Holiness was in great pain and agony. Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, while leaving his mortal frame (he was suffering from throat cancer), said, "My king (soul) is with me only; I have to give up my body."

Really, Soul is immortal under all circumstances and conditions. No weapon can cut it; fire cannot burn it; the air or wind cannot wither it. It cannot be harmed or touched by anything. It is uncleaveable; cannot be burnt or wetted or dried. It is immutable, ideal, all-permeating, ever silent and immovable. The *Bhagavadgita* clearly says that no outside object, whether air, fire, wind or weapon, can affect the soul.

The soul possesses mysterious virtues which remain inexplicable even after a lot of books are devoted to its description. It is because of delusion that a man constantly finds his soul identified with the body. Ordinary beings cannot distinguish body from the soul. Only the realized souls, on the other hand, know themselves to be as the Self.

It is through deeper meditation, sincere devotion, strong will-power and, above all, *Guru Kripa* that the *Sadhaka* reaches the horizon of the spiritual world. Devotees of a higher order start realizing omnipresence, omniscience of 'Soul'. Human consciousness then, by and by, gains in spiritual terms. It transforms into cosmic consciousness. But here we are badly in need of a true Guru who can guide us to the supreme destination. The body, in which the soul resides, has to part with it today or tomorrow Kingship

remains unchanged. The worldly kingdom vanishes (the body perishes but not the soul). In brief, Soul is peerless, unique, evergreen, and through and through Divine.

The *Sadhaka* or *Guru*, with his regular practice, enjoys the spiritual realm. Worldly joys or sorrows do not touch or affect its spirit. It is "the aspirant's will-power that changes his thought into energy", observed Sri Sri Parmahansa Yogananda.

The Divine spirit springs forth through meditation. Meditation should continue regularly without break, then the devotee will be in the good books of the Master.

Really, Bhagawaan Ji is the embodiment of the eternal power which gushes out; but we, ordinary souls, do not feel this because of lack of experience and divine wisdom. Wisdom or experience is not communicable at all. Only realized souls can feel Bhagawaan Ji's spiritual height.

The awakened soul becomes conscious of its oneness with the Spirit as the physical consciousness of a person is transformed by vigorous practice and meditation from delusion into divine wakefulness or Soul-consciousness. The *sadhak* becomes a cosmic researcher and dreamer and finally finds himself safe and sound.

The main theme of the *Bhagavdagita* is that, after renouncing all wordly desires, man becomes the king of kings. Through renunciation of all desires, a heavy weight becomes lighter and total inner liberation springs forth from all quarters. Cosmic realization permeates every nerve of the aspirant's bosom.

In sum, Jagadguru Bhagawaanji was outstanding as an embodiment of spiritual realization.

The Immortal Does not Die

– Vijay Wali

"Amar Chha Maran?" Thus spake Bhagawaanji, as mentioned on page 48 of his acclaimed biography entitled "Jagadguru Bhagawaan Gopinathji", authored by Pt. S.N. Fotedar. This dictum was delivered by him to his devotees, about a month and a half before leaving his mortal frame.

This is a vast subject, which can easily take a fat volume in just explaining the references to it contained in our religious scriptures, so it is just right to concentrate on Bhagawaanji's auspicious being only.

Bhagawaanji needs no introduction, as volumes already stand written on him by the learned men of letters. But here we are reading between the lines, to have a feel of the great Kashmiri Pandit who rose to higher realms of spirituality commanding the title of 'Bhagawaan.'

Bhagawaanji was born to the Bhans, an orthodox but simple Kashmiri Pandit family in Bana Mohalla locality of old down town, Srinagar, in 1898 A.D. The area (at that time) with concentration of religiously devoted Kashmiri Pandits, wore an aura of simple saintly atmosphere, in which lingered the fragrance of the legacy of the Rishis who had dwelt in Kashmir for thousands of years doing penance and *sadhana* in deep forests, thus shaping it as Rishi Vatika.

Bhagawaanji was thus born into an atmosphere in which our saintly ancestors, although attending to their worldly duties of *Grahastha Aashram*, through austerity, penance and truthfulness had (to all possible extent) controlled *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *moha* (attachment), *loba* (greed) and *ahankara* (pride), thus devoting themselves to the righteous path of *Dharma*.

Naturally, Bhagawaanji opened his eyes to the 'dhyana' of Devi Jagat Amba at shrines like Tula-Mull, Hari Parbat, Khana Bharan, Khrew and Bhaderkali. Through his ears he heard the recitation of *Ved Mantras*, *Panchastavi*, *Shiv Sutras*, *Mahima Stotra* and *Srimad Bhagavadgita*. His nose smelled the aromatic herbal fragrances emanating from regularly performed *hawans* on auspicious

occasions. His hands touched the *chandan* and *kesar* for *tilak* and fragrant colourful flowers for offering to God. His tongue tasted the *Naveed* and *Charan-Amrit* from sacred temples and *yagyas*.

As he watched strictly over the observance of the fasts of *Ashtami*, *Pooranmashi*, *Amavasya* and *Ekadashis*, he gradually began on the path of *Dharma*, following the example of his father, Pt. Narayan Joo Bhan, who without a split-second thought handed over his property to his step-mother, exposing himself to miseries, only to be righteous. As ups and downs of the world taught him the realities of life, Bhagawaanji also got his formal basic education, which enabled him to read and write Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri, English and Persian languages. He got access to religious scriptures, which were an integral part of a Kashmiri Pandit household. Morever, during his stint as a compositor in Vishnath Press, Srinagar, he also got ample chances to read books of his interest on spirituality and religion. So Bhagawaanji's pious soul shone in the light of self-knowledge or 'Atam Gyan', acquiring knowledge also through all possible outer sources to become completely enlightened.

Many versions are in circulation about his initiation into spirituality, but it is amply clear that he, like an awakened soul, climbed up the ladder of knowledge with auspicious *karmas* through his own penance, determination and hard work. It is noteworthy that, whenever Bhagawaanji was requested by people to suggest a *guru*, he simply pointed towards *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, saying that any verse of it can be taken as a *guru*. *Srimad Bhagavadgita* tells us clearly about the existence of the soul, the *Atma*, describing it as the smallest part of the Greater Reality, '*Paramatma*, which cannot be cut by a sword or burnt by fire or destroyed by any means. It is immortal. So naturally, Bhagawaanji, by endorsing the scripture, endorsed this reality, which he followed in letter and spirit to be one with the *Paramatma*.

Kashmir inherits its great legacy of Shaivism, the Trika doctrine as a unique and universal school of thought. The word 'Trika' is

derived from the Sanskrit word 'Turya' meaning the Fourth. It is well known that everything is supposed to have three dimensions, which is the basic fundamental of this world. A *Jeeva* (in this case the human being) has three observed states of consciousness: *Swapna* (the dream state), *Jagrat* (state of awakening) and *Sushapati* (deep sleep). It is mentioned that Param Shiva, the ultimate benefactor, although omnipresent, cannot be observed in these three states of consciousness. He is visible through "Turya", the fourth state of consciousness, which is different from the states of awakening, sleep and dreaming. This final state of Shiva-consciousness, where a part submerges in the whole, through consciousness, and resides in the blissful state called "Chidananda". Chita is the mind-stuff, feeling only (no gross entity), and 'Ananda' or bliss (also a feeling only). So this consciousness in itself is supposed to be *Param Shiva,* and to be in this state means to be in unison with Reality. Bhagawaanji was a living example of being 'Turya Teet'. This state can be simply understood like 'Samadhi' when *Sadhak, Dhyana* and *Dev* or *Ish* are in unison. From another point of view, befits the personality of Bhagawaanji to deliberate on this subject of immortality, because he is the Bhagawaan and gods are beyond perceptions of mortality, a part of eternal truth. It is true that devotees like a specific form for worshipping, like that of Rama, Krishna, Buddha or Bhagawaanji. But actually what he tried to convey is that he will remain immortal in his faith in Him and His form.

The ways of spiritualists are altogether different from the common path of *Dharma*, although both lead to the same goal. Actually, *Dharma* is a school wherefrom the awakened souls graduate to spirituality. Bhagawaanji's legacy is not lacking in any respect, as Kashmiri Pandits have pleasantly blended *Shiva* and *Shakti* points of view, the philosophy of which leads to nothing less than Salvation. Bhagawaanji's penance at Hari Parbat clearly shows his efforts to concentrate on Sri Chakra, the mystic universal cycle, which for humans corresponds to the awakening of Kundalni. A

worldly being starting from the outermost *Trelokiyama Chakra*, traversing through various states, becomes one with the divine consciousness of *Sarva Anandmaya Chakra* where 'Samanvey' or unification of Shiva and Shakti become the point of ultimate bliss of eternity.

There is no doubt that *Dharma* is a science of life and the universe, which amply covers different aspects of being. Bhagawaanji's utterances have scientific relevance also. The first law of Conservation of Energy says, "Matter can neither be created nor destroyed..." This is the fundamental law of modern scientific research. This makes us understand that whatever exists in this universe remains there, even though it seems to change shapes and forms. Now, after centuries of research, it has been (presumably) found that a 'God Particle' exists; this grey particle is supposed to be filling the space between celestial bodies. It is opined that this very grey particle, the 'god particle', formed enormous matter, which was later blasted off by 'spandan' of 'Om', the sound of the sacred syllable; scrambling its mass across the universe to form stars, galaxies, planets, etc. If the whole of the invisible and visible, solid and spirit, has evolved from the same 'god particle', then what takes birth and what perishes? Bhagawaanji, a yogi of the highest order, identified himself with this 'spandan' or vibration, which is supposed to be the life force of immortality.

The Shaivite thought says that *Param Shiva* dwells in every thing still or moving, 'Jad' or 'chetan' and forms existence of the whole universe. Bhagawaanji, who went to *Shiv Dham* by reciting 'Om Nama Shivai', in his last breath, well resided in the truthfulness of *Param Shiva's* absoluteness. Our modern science also endorses this *Shaivite* view. We know that matter consists of tiny particles called molecules compressed closely together. Molecules consist of atoms, the known smallest unit of matter. The Atom, furthermore consists of electrons, protons and neutrons which are housed in its womb. These electrons and protons are seen constantly revolving

round the nucleus of the atom at a tremendous speed forming everlasting energy which can be seen as the 'spandan', the eternal vibration. The highest souls like Bhagawaanji identify their existence with this immortal state of being, thus living ever thereafter in this consciousness.

There are many facets to one's being, apart from the physical, mortal body, which has many other aspects of existence also, like his name, voice, beliefs, teachings, good deeds, consciousness, etc., which are immortal in the sense that they go on living even after the cremation of the mortal frame, apart from the perennial being 'the soul'. Thus Bhagawaanji lives on in our immortal consciousness of our deep devotion to him.

Jai Guru Dev

Amar Chha Maraan?

– Chaman Lal Raina (Ajmer)

Mrityor ma amritam gamaya...,

'Lead me from death to immortality' is the Upanishadic aphorism of great relevance. It is universal in content, but Yogic in spirit. *Mritue*, which is death, is the cessation of the *sharira*/body from the Atman/Self. The Atman, which abides in the body, is known as the Jivatma. The *Jiva*, a living being, has to die. It is a natural law, a universal truth, but the Atma never dies. It is 'Shashvata'– the eternal one. It is infinite in nature, as explained by Sri Krishna to Arjuna during the Mahabharata war. If we turn the pages of the *Devi Mahatmyam*, we read similiar lines in that scripture = '*Ekaiva aham jagatya at dvitiya ka mama apara.*'

Atma cannot be defined, as any thing or object which has a definition is limited in nature, content, essence, bound by the realms of time, space and situation. It is true with *sharira*—the life content not with the eternal essence of life, which is Atman. The Shaiva saints of Kashmir analysed this concept and put it in an aphorism, saying *Chaitanyam Atma*—that Atman is *Chaitanyam* . a very minute and subtle essence of consciousness, bearing its association with the creation, passing through the graphs of time related to sustenance and ultimate in dissolution. That is the Bhava Chakra–cycle of existence. Bhava means 'to be, to exist'– the True nature.

Creation is understood as an ordered evolution of life, which is verily the quintessence of '*chaitanyam*'/ consciousness. Consciousness is varied, from the Agamic aphorism '*Aa-brahma-kiita jananyai namah*', says the *Lalita Sahsranama,* a wonderful 'Nama Rupa' of the Divine Mother Lalita Tripura Sundari. It is also invoked in the *Ratri Suktam*–the first hymn addressed to the Yoga Maya by Brahma, where the primal sound is OM, Pranava. It is 'Vashtkara,' self-creation, as said in the *Shri Chandi* read with the *Pradhanik Rahasya* of the *Durga Sapta Shati*. Our world action figures an evolution of manifold power gathered and piled up in the

crude intricacies of Mooda Prakriti, which is unmanifested matter. It evolves from the Mooda Prakriti to the Moola Prakriti, as explained in the *Bhavani Sahsranama*. The first recipient of this secret was Nandakeshwara, an intimate attendant of Mahadeva–Shiva.

The *Sahsranama* sees immortality in the life-urge. Various are the grades in moving towards the Yogic self. It means that consciousness is in the smallest insect, evolving through various experiences of life after life, finally reaching the Brahmi state of mind–the Yogic flux of the Lord of creation, who is adored as Brahma. It is the consciousness of the Absolute, which works through Brahma and His manifestation. So 'Jiva and Jagat' are complementary to each other.

How? Its formation: according to the Shakta Agamas of Kashmir, the Jivatma is made of the 'manas'/mind, 'buddhi'/intellect, 'ahankara'/ego and 'prána'/vital force. The 'chit' is the psychic part, as explained by Sri Aurobindo. It is ordinarily used for mental consciousness in general, with thought, feeling, emotions, etc., taken together with a stress here and there, and sometimes on the feelings as in the 'Chittaparmathi', which is the subtle nature of conciousness, where no thin line çan be drawn to distinguish between the Chetna and Atma. Sometimes in the thoughtful mind, it achieves the Brahmi state in its wider sense. An experience in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Parmahansa explains the truth. It is also true with the Yogis who go beyond the body consciousness and abide in the spirit, through the process of Ashtanga Yoga, or Kundalini Yoga or by purely surrendering to the 'Naam-Ruupa' of the Ishta Devata. Swami Vivekananda was such a yogi, who did not live even forty years of life. The age span does not matter at all in the Eternity of Time. Jagadguru Adi Shankara is an Amriti Svaruupa through his commentary on the Vedanta, though he lived for 32 years only. It is '*Atmano mokshartham jagat hitaya cha*', as always preached by Swami Vivekananda. 'I live not for my Moksha but for the betterment of the world'. That is *Amar Chha Maran*?

The force inherent in the Infinite brings out of it a web of thought-channels eternally, the structure of its action in a universe as explained by the Shiva Yogini Lalleshvari–the Lall Ded of our spirits and thought in its inclusive nature. The same is seen in the *Rahasya Upadesha* of Shri Alkheshwari.

So far as Jivatma, the embodied soul in the human form is concerned, it has a strong potential to be evolved. Of course, the 'Pramata', the *karmik* as a human personality, is highly evolved with the intrinsic quality of the recognition of self, which is known as Prativignya in Kashmir Shaivism. We are blessed with the teachings of Abhinavagupta, Utpaladeva, Swami Ramji of the Trika system, etc., in the thought pattern embedded in their 'Sadhana Paddhati'. There is seen the identity of soul/jivatma with Self/ Shiva/Parmatman. Lall Ded has emphasised this Shaivistic thought in her *Vaakhs*.

Shiva Chhu Thali Thali Rozan

As long as life exists, it has to undergo various changes in its course; from its very inception in the mother's womb, the 'prana'/vital force works in the body. It passes through various stages, is subjected to disease, decay and finally death, which is known as *Mritue*. He who has conquered *mritue* is adored as *Mritunjaya*. But that is not the Chiranjivi state which is true of the Sapta Rishis. They live with longevity for imparting the eternal knowledge of the Vedas. The *Mritunjaya* state is self-realization. "As nature rises in the universal scale, the same Moola Prakriti liberates them into their recognisable scales of energy, discloses the operations by which they can feel themselves and their greatness", so says Sri Aurobindo in his work, *The Problem of Rebirth*.

The famous Yajurvedic Mantra is recited by millions in India and by the followers of *Sanatana Dharma* throughout the globe. It follows:

"*Trayambkam yajamahe sughandhim pushti vardhanam*
Urvarukam iva bandhanat mritur mokhshiyama amritat".

We are blessed to have seen the pulsation of this Vedic Mantra in the life of Bhagawaan Gopinathji, who would often observe, "Amar chha maraan"? Only a great yogi can utter such a grand aphorism.

Consider carefully this aphorism. It is 'Vismaya' - an exclamation (Amar does not die) as well as a 'Prashna'– an intriguing question to be understood by the yogis (Who am I?) and also an affirmation of the Upanishadic wisdom, put in a very thoughtful idiom by Bab Bhagawaanji.

Psychospiritual Personality and Immortality
(Amar Chha Maraan?)

– Bal Krishen Sanyasi

Physics has made us aware of the fact that there are four kinds of forces known by the names (i) Electromagnetic forces, (ii) strong forces, (iii) weak forces, and (iv) the force of gravity. Three internationally famous physicists, namely, Abdul Salam, Steven Weinberg and Sheldon L Glashaw, formulated the idea of "Electroweak" forces involved in the unification of electromagnetic and weak forces. Quite recently, physicists have formulated a grand unified theory of electromagnetic, weak and strong forces. Gravity has been yet left alone. This attempt is still under way.

Swami Vivekananda has rightly maintained that science is nothing but the finding of unity. The knowledge of the final unity in the universe is to be attained by scientists for which they are still at work. The physicists are thus dreaming of a "superunified quantum theory" that is quantizing gravity. This will integrate gravity into one primeval force. So the picture which emerges out of all these efforts is something which can well be compared with the Vedantic concept of Brahman or the Absolute as the source of all creation.

From Chandogya Upanishad we learn that living beings have three seeds, the egg-born, the live-born, the shoot-born.

The Upanishad further says that the Deity thought that He must endow these three deities with life, with the self, and thus He created differences of name and form. While doing this, He thought that He must make each one of them threefold. So the Deity entered the three deities with life and self to create the difference of name and form and made each one of them threefold. Chandogya Upanishad clarifies the threefoldness by saying that the red form of the sun is the form of heat, the white is that of water, the black is that of food. What seems unknown is the combination of red, white and black. In other words, the sunness of the sun is unknown. It is therefore clear that the all-pervasiveness of Brahman which appears to disappear is not a reality.

The reality is that Gyana Shakti, being a vibration of consciousness, becomes limited, and the objects are perceived with limited vision. Before we assert ourselves to complete our observations on the whims and caprice of the yogis, we have to keep in mind that the yogis have always emphasized the importance of the gradual and careful preparation of the mind and body to receive and control the unlimited powers of the superconscious state.

When the mind of a yogi is expanded to the subliminal layer of the superconscious mind, it merges in the limitless sea of vibrations and from the world of sense is transported to the realm of the infinite. Those rare individuals who attain this exalted state feel all the variegated ways of the universe flowing eternally within and without them, radiating in all directions, without beginning or end, and perceive all creation, from stones to stars, as undulations in the void. Thus a yogi goes beyond the very fabric of space and time. To a yogi, the world, with all its sorrows and joys, pleasures and pains, is a vibrational play. Abinav Gupta who brought to light the vastness of the Trika philosophy enshrined in Kashmir Shaivism, named the above-mentioned stage of a yogi as *Jagadanand* (Jagat-Anand). Abhinav Gupta who was himself a yogi and philosopher of the highest order talked about the internal freedom and external freedom to be achieved first. These can be termed as mental freedom and physical freedom achievable together to form eternal bliss.

This whole gamut can be a narration of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. To explain this narrative of dialectical thought, we have to understand first the syndrome of unity and diversity that exists in the theory of creation and creativity. *Aatman* is the splinter of the *Param Aatman*. Thus the splinters of one unique whole that is *Param Aataman* have the feature of diversity. This diversity in totality is desirous to merge ultimately into *Param Aatman* to be a part of one, the unique whole.

The thesis thus stands for the oneness whereas synthesis stands for the diversity (scattered as splinters). The antithesis is the effort in

the direction of merger to attain oneness. The urge to merge in super consciousness in a yogi leads him to achieve internal and external freedom to smoothen his path of self-realisation.

The very concept of diversity is the essential ingredient for conceiving the unity of soul, mind and Buddhi for purposes of realising that which is otherwise beyond one's imaginary flight. A yogi alone has the capacity of striking at the very outset at such elements which he feels are divergent but helpful only when thoroughly understood and channelised.

The urge to merge is no doubt present in every soul but every soul is not aware of this essential ingredient which is scattered but has the utility to fulfil the urge of merger. It is because of this reason that all others do not develop the psycho-spiritual personality and are lost in wilderness. The psychospiritual personality has the inborn tendency of bringing the soul, the mind and the *Buddhi* at par while completing the process of achieving internal and external freedom from within. The soul, the mind and the Buddhi otherwise have divergent views to follow, thus having divergent identities as well. Diversity is explicitly expressive in nature. Expressions are not heard but felt by the spiritualists who manage to direct them to produce the desired results after they feel its pinch and get it controlled. The rest take them as dictates which they obey and get lost. Among these three elements, it is the mind which plays the role of a dictator. The inherent quality of a yogi is to downplay with such a dictator. This quality in him is his *Sanskara* with which he is endowed within his mother's womb. The *Sanskara* as such has a *Satvik* temper. It is this temper which leads satvik pursha towards elevation. The elevation is from satvik nature to *Chit* and *Anand* and from Chit and Anand to *Jagat-Anand*. *Chit* and *Anand* ensures to realise self where as *Jagat-Anand* is a stage wherein I consciousness is felt and diversities which are apparently present in the cosmic reality are non-existant in the realm of bliss. It is this I consciousness in which a saint of the highest order drenches himself to get fully absorbed in his consciousness with the colours

flowing eternally within him and without him. The saint or a yogi of such a stature is always living in moods which are changeable and create in him the whims to utter loudly or wispher in ears of those who accompany him or else speak to himself when left alone. His utterances are meaningful as those are based on the observations which he makes while bcing the part of the oura that surrounds him.

Here we are reminded of the various uttrances which the saint of all time Bagawaan Gopinathji made from time to time. He once said, "Amar Cha Maran". Before such a valuable comment of the yogi, Gopinathji, is elaborated, I am reminded of a comment of Abhinav Gupta from his Tantra-loka. He says that to achieve eternal bliss or to arrive at a stage of *Jagatanand*, one has to pass through five stages before aspiring to reach the desired goal. These five stages are put as under :

1. Unshakable devotion to Rudhra
2. To develop power of incantation (Mantra Sidhi)
3. Capacity to achieve his desired end.
4. To achieve control over five elements.
5. To attain full knowledge of all the Shastras.

However, the unshakable devotion to *Rudhra* can be termed as Bhakti Marg. *Bhakti* yoga is one of the forms of yoga. By adopting *Bhakti Marg* one develops the capacity to achieve the desired goal. One attains complete perfection by adopting *Bhakti Marg* and as such the *satvik* temperament is prone to follow paths leading to all forms of yoga including *Bhakti yoga*. By adopting *Bhakti Marg* a yogi excellently passes through the five stages mentioned above.

It is now clear that a *Sadhak* through his *Bhakti* yoga attains complete maturity in yoga and like all other yogis keeps awake during what appears as night to others. Similarly what appears day to others is night for him. Saint Gopinathjji had attained a stage through his *Bhakti* to *Shiva* and *Shakti*, in yoga which ensured his soul's merger with the *Parmatman*. He was one with the Reality. A realised soul and knowledgeable enough to make us aware of the secrets of

immortality.

After cognising himself as the absolute, no question and doubts are left in the mind. All doubts cease for ever. All questions are answered. The yogis transcend all the laws of nature, and even the laws of cause and effect which otherwise bind a person strongly to the plane of self-cognition. Realisation makes one free which is everlasting wherein he finds neither beginning nor end. One who has realised that eternal truth says, " O lord when I think of myself which is the *Aatman*, which is a part of absolute, then I am one with the infinite ocean of existence, intelligence, bliss and love." This is the theme of the immortality where-in mortality is non-existent.

Yogis do not view their understanding as different from the supreme principles - their true inner nature. The message which they pass on to their devotees is that ocean is nothing but a huge body of water. The waves which arise at one place and fall some-where else are nothing but water. That which creates these movements is also water, however, high the tide may be, its essence which is water remains unchanged. Thus the basic unity of the ocean is never destroyed. The message is therefore clear that *Jiva-Aatma* is the individual self which remains entangled with desires and passions and the *Param-Aatman* is the real *Aatman* devoid of all desires. So the conclusion which can be drawn is that the universal body is infinitely large. The same forces which are working in the universe, work in a miniature form in this human body. By the power of concentration we can experience all this. But the highest result which can be attained at the spiritual plane is the attainment of God consciousness which in Kashmir Shaivism is called as self-recognition. God-consciousness comes through concentration upon our true self which is a part and parcel of the universal being. This very universal being is eternal, birthless and deathless,

Amar Chha Maraan?

– Arvind Shah

Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji was once at Tulamulla. The occasion was the Zestha Ashthami. A message reaches Bhagavaan Ji that his brother has passed away. Bhagavaan Ji remarks "Amar chha maraan"?

"Amar chha maraan" is a complete expression. It is an 'idiom', a pithy-saying. It is the overflow of a drop of cream from the ocean of milk held within the depths of Bhagawaan Ji. While pondering on the question, it has been very spontaneous for me to bring it to a point of expression where it could be penned down. The dimensions of the meaning of the idiom are limitlessly great. Wherever the idiom is used for expression and explanation, it holds meaning and fits into an answer and explanation. It goes on to explain whatever we try to find and know. The idiom is a complete linguistic expression; transcendental as well as scientific. It is a reference to the soul which is immortal and is not restricted by the bonds of time and form. It is above time and form as an absolute reality. The phases of time and form are regularly subjects of change whereas the soul is independent of such restrictions and is eternal. It explains the relation of the mortal and the immortal. Everything in this universe exists between mortal and immortal; thus every situation can be understood as between 'Amar' and 'Maran' (immortal and mortal)

"Amar chha maran?" is an expression of time. It is a story of time in the frame of being. It is a story of time in the frame of universes; it is not limited to the frame of this universe only. In fact, 'Amar' is not limited at all; it is free, beyond the concepts of limitations. Since the idiom "Amar chha maran?" is to be framed for expression in sentences, it becomes necessary to imagine a frame to help express it in words; otherwise, it is an expression that needs to be felt for the understanding of the soul as an immortal entity within a mortal frame (form). The mortal frame with the soul within is measurable on many parameters; but, since the soul is independent of time and form, it sets itself free from one form or

another; so, the form is subject to change but the soul is not. The form is in a particular shape as long as the soul is within; but as soon as the soul sets itself free for another form, there is adaptation of change in form.

"Amar chha maran?" is an idiom of three words:

"Amar"– that does not die / immortal

"chha"–it is a question / it is an answer too : Does / Doesn't.

"maran"–die/ mortal.

The idiom is complete, as far as the sentence is concerned; the word "Amar" is a near complete expression which may have explanations like absolute. "Chha" is an expression of a position between inquisitiveness and its reply. "Maran" (die) is subject to "Jivan" (birth / living) i.e. dead and living; the two are complementary and cannot stand independent of each other. The word Maran embodies the meaning of Jivan also. In the idiom the words, Amar and Maran make a combination of immortal and mortal interlinked by a word that is interrogatory in nature. It is this interrogatory expression which makes it to explain the very uncertainty of existence and makes it the vibrant idiom to explain whatever inquisitiveness is taken for explanation, meaning and understanding, for uncertainty is the only certainty of existence.

When the words "Amar" - "Cha" - "Maran" are synchronized with one another, the expression by itself becomes universal and beyond. And the idiom of three words becomes limitless. It is an interrogative expression and simultaneously it is an assertive expression. In other words it is a question that enshrines an answer in itself. 'Amar' and 'Maran' are two nouns (noun forms) of the same kind and nature. 'Cha is a verb. The verb induces activity in otherwise still nouns. Each of the nouns works as a subject and object of the verb. On assessing the idiom, it becomes clear that there is no straight demarcation to understand which of the nouns is a subject and which of the nouns is an object. Each noun has a character to function as a subject as well as object. So when a person draws inference from the idiom, the expressions are multifarious. The verb 'Chha' joins the two nouns, and

it gives energy to both the nouns. The energy of the verb relates the idiom to the worldly energies for day-to-day processes.

One of the famous expressions in English literature by Shakespeare is, "to be or not to be". This is a question that needs an answer. A person in daily routine gets haunted to find an answer to this question many a time. And sometimes a quest is started to find an answer. Similarly, the famous expression by John Keats "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" is an assertive expression and answers many questions. But the idiom "Amar Chha Maran?" has given the literary idiom which answers all the confusions - whatever the quest may be. And that is why it is an interrogative expression as well as an assertive expression. When we are confronted with a situation of uncertainty and unable to decide, flashing, Bhagavaan Ji before our eyes, recapitulate and the idiom "Amar chha maran?" on breath, here comes the right solution, and dismantled are all the limitations that keep up the confusion – try it in a situation of challenge to find the right way ahead. The idiom is an expression; to carry on working with dedication and determination, not to bother about distractions and get into confusion by worrying about the outcome of working, but be focused and carry on. Since there is a non-traversable relationship between mortal and immortal Amar and Maran only optimism needs to be looked to. The idiom sets aside the elements of distress and installs peace. Therefore the idiom is an expression of optimism. There is no place for pessimism. "Amar chha maran?" is an expression of hope and more hope: always as far as the nature and characteristics of the idiom are concerned

On reading "Brief History of Time" by Stephen W Hawking, where he goes on and on to catch hold of understanding time but, he, again and again despite being "greatest theoretical physicist (new York Times) finds himself in limits. The theory of relativity puts an end to the idea of absolute time and also the belief that time is absolute and space is not absolute. Further he goes on to explain in his book that we must understand that time is not completely separate from and independent of space but is combined with it to form an

object called time-space. (Brief History of Time, inference from pages 21-24). "Amar chha maran" is an expression of time and space, it dissolves the divide between existence and non-existence. It condenses time and space into one. The idiom 'Amar chha maran?' by a scientific explanation can be said to represent the story of time.

The idiom "Amar chha maraan?" goes ahead of this theory. It goes ahead of time-space continuum.

"Amar" independent of any limitations whatsoever,

"Chha" an interrogative and simultaneously an assertive expression: oscillation between curiosity and fulfilment-question and answer, birth and death, mortality and immortality.

"Maraan" this is a concept of no life to bring forth a new life

The idiom "Amar cha maraan?" represents "oscillatory universe theory". *Amar* and *Maraan* are the ends of oscillation to change positions through the medium of 'Chha'. One implication of the Big Bang Theory is that the universe may grow cold and dark and die an ultimate heat death. This will happen if the universe expands for ever. Although this scenario will destroy all life and the ability of the universe to work, the universe itself would survive for an infinite period of time. Alternatively, in the universe the expansion will eventually stop. In this scenario the universe will begin to contract once expansion ends. Although contraction would be very slow, at first the contraction rate would accelerate and grow hotter and brighter until it ends in the Big Crunch, in which it implodes into a singularity and gets crushed out of existence. This is the Big Bang theory and the Big Crunch theory. However, some scientists speculate that the Big Crunch would not signal the end. They believe that perhaps another Big Bang would follow the Big Crunch, giving rise to a new universe of possibilities. The idea that Big Bang follows Big Crunches in a never-ending cycle known as an oscillating universe. Oscillating theory puts forth the model which follows infinite, self-sustaining cycles. The oscillation theory recognises a universe beginning with a big bang and ending with

a big crunch: in the interim the universe would expand for a period of time before the gravitational attraction of matter causes it to collapse back and undergo a bounce. (Albert Einstein, 1930; Richard C Tomer 1934).

On similar lines the new cyclic model of creation of the universe is gaining attention of the scientists. The theory describes a universe exploding into existence not just once, but repeatedly over time (Paul Steinhardt and Neil Turok, 2001; Lauris Baum, 2007).

Whether it is the oscillation model or the cyclic model, the basic concept is no different from "Amar Cha Maran?": the shift from one form of existence, *Amar* to another form of existence *Maran* joined by an energy quantum *Chha*. The same can be explained in the basic unit of life. Relating and understanding the oscillation model or cyclic model with the breathing model of a living creation, we can infer that the intake of breath is expansion, exhalation of breath is contraction; and in between the two phases of breathing in and breading out is Chha. Chha, the intermediary phase, is the most important phase that gives existence to intake as well as outtake. It is the in-between phase that joins *Amar* and *Maran* in terms of the oscillation model / cyclic model that needs to be recognized for understanding the real truth.

With the idiom, here I will venture to go a step ahead to call "Amar chha maran?" a life *mantra* which goes further than the concepts of physics, not in contradiction to it, but in its furtherance to the perceivable human limitations for realizing the truths of Being. The explanations of the *mantra* have amply been put forth in relation with different *sholakas* of the *Bhagavad Gita* and other scriptures by different authors and I, with all my limitations have sought the blessing of Bhagawaan Gopi Nath Ji to attempt to understand "Amar Chha Maran" as an idiom, as a scientific expression and as a spiritual preposition. I leave it to the readers to judge my expression of the words to put forth my understanding of "*Amar Chha Maran*?"

Om Namoh Bhagavati Gopi Nathai

अमर छा मरान
अमर मरता है क्या

— प्रो० (डॉ०) प्राणनाथ त्रिछ़ल

अमर शब्द में 'न मरने वाला' का बोध निहित है, अतः यह पूछना भी निरर्थक है कि क्या अमर मरता है?

साधारण भाषा में देवताओं के लिए अमर शब्द का प्रयोग होता है। देवता में इस भाव का समावेश है कि इस का निर्माण पंचभूतों में से केवल अग्नि के गुणमात्र, तेज, से हुआ है। इस में पृथ्वी, जल, वायु तथा आकाश का सवर्था अभाव है, केवल अग्नि के एक गुणमात्र से निर्मित होने के कारण इसका नाश होना अथवा मर जाना इसके स्वभाव में है ही नहीं।

मरना या अन्त को प्राप्त होना केवल पंचभूतों से निर्मित शरीर का स्वभाव है। 'जातस्यहि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवंजन्म मृतस्यच' (गी० 2.27)

इस 'जन्म लेने वाले' का तत्व इतना ही है कि यह जन्म लेने से पहले भी अव्यक्त था मरने के पश्चात् भी अव्यक्त है, इन दो अवस्थाओं के बीच की अवस्था में ही व्यक्त रहता है। (गी० 2.28)

इस शरीर में एक स्थायी वस्तु है जो जगत् के नाना प्रकार के परिर्वतनों से गुज़रता हुआ सदा एकरस रहता है, इसी को देही या आत्मा कहा गया है। जब तक ज्ञान नहीं हो जाता तब तक यह आत्मा जन्म–कर्म के बन्धन से मुक्त नहीं हो सकता। परन्तु यह जिज्ञासा स्वाभाविक है कि यदि 'यह आत्मा अच्छेद्य, अदाह्य, अक्लेद्य, अशोष्य है' (गी० 2.24), दुःख से परे है और चित्स्वरूप है तो जन्म और कर्म के बंधन में पड़ता कैसे है और मृत्यु के पश्चात् एक जन्म का कर्म–फल दूसरे जन्म में भोगने के लिए क्योंकर ले जाता है? कर्म–फल जड़ हैं, अतः उनमें इच्छा नहीं होती, इसलिए वे आत्मा का पीछा नहीं कर सकते। आस्तिक इस जिज्ञासा को यह कह कर शांत करते हैं कि 'ईश्वर इस व्यवस्था को इस प्रकार चला रहा है'। *(rationalists)* युक्तिवादी इस कथन से सहमत नहीं हो सकते।

गीता के दूसरे अध्याय (श्लोक 22) में भगवान् ने कहा है कि जिस प्रकार मनुष्य पुराने वस्त्र छोड़ कर नये धारण करता है, उसी प्रकार आत्मा जीर्ण शरीर को त्याग कर नवीन शरीर धारण करता है। इस सन्दर्भ में वृहदारण्यकोपनिषद् में 'लिंग शरीर की बात कही गयी है। 'जिस प्रकार जोंक एक तृण से दूसरे पर जाते समय पहले अपने शरीर का अगला हिस्सा रखती है और फिर बाक़ी हिस्से को सिकोड़ लेती है, उसी प्रकार आत्मा पुराने शरीर को छोड़कर नये शरीर मं प्रवेश करता है। इस प्रकार आत्मा स्वयं ही दूसरे शरीर में प्रवेश करता है। उपनिषदों में इस कथन की आवृत्ति मिलती है कि आत्मा के साथ लिंग शरीर या सूक्ष्म शरीर भी जाता है। शरीर से निकलने के समय आत्मा अपने साथ विज्ञान, मन, प्राण, श्रोत्र, पृथ्वी, जल वायु, आकाश, तेजस, अतेजस, काम, अकाम, क्रोध, अक्रोध, धर्म, अधर्म, इत्यादि सब कुछ लेता है। इसका यह अर्थ हुआ कि आत्मा के साथ समस्त धर्माधर्म तथा तन्मात्र बंधे होते हैं। प्रकृति के विकार स्वरूप तेईस तत्त्वों में अन्तिम पाँच स्थूल हैं, बाकी अठारह के अठारह तत्त्व मृत्यु के समय पुरुष के साथ ही निकल जाते हैं। यदि पुरुष ज्ञान प्राप्त किए बिना मरता है ये तत्त्व उसके साथ लगे होते हैं। इन अठारह तत्त्वों में से मन, बुद्धि, अहंकार, और दस इन्द्रियाँ प्रकृति के गुणमात्र हैं, उनकी स्थिति के लिए किसी ठोस आधार की आवश्यकता है। पाँच तन्मात्र इन तत्त्वों को वहन करने का सामर्थ्य रखते हैं क्योंकि ये अपेक्षाकृत ठोस हैं। जब तक मनुष्य जीता है तब तक उसका शरीर इन गुणों का आश्रय होता है पर जब उसकी मृत्यु होती है तब तन्मात्र ही इन गुणों के वहन करने वाले होते हैं। उपनिषदों के अनुसार प्रकृति या माया का कोई स्वतन्त्र अस्तित्व नहीं है केवल ब्रह्म या आत्मा का ही नामरूपात्मक स्वरूप हैं। परिवर्तित होने वाले नाम और रूप हैं, आत्मा स्थिर और शाश्वत है। नाम–रूप का आवरण सर्वत्र समान नहीं होता है। इसके भी अनेक स्तर हैं–जड़ हैं, चेतन है; चेतन की भी लाखों योनियाँ हैं, जिनमें मनुष्य–योनि श्रेष्ठ है। आत्मा के दो

आवरण हैं: शुक्र–शोणित–निर्मित शरीर (अर्थात् अन्नमय कोष); दूसरा आवरण अधिक सूक्ष्म है, उसमें प्राणमयकोष, मनोमयकोष, ज्ञानमयकोष और आनन्दमयकोष हैं; अर्थात् स्थूल शरीर की अपेक्षा प्राण सूक्ष्म हैं, प्राण की अपेक्षा मन, मनकी अपेक्षा बुद्धि और इन सबकी अपेक्षा सूक्ष्म आत्मा है।

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः।। (गी० 3.42)

स्थूल अन्नमय कोष को छोड़ कर शेष जो सब कोष हैं, उन्हें अर्थात् इन्द्रियों और पाँच तन्मात्रों को सूक्ष्म या लिंग शरीर कहा जाता है। मृत्यु होने पर स्थूल देह से आत्मा का विच्छेद हो जाता है, परन्तु लिंग शरीर से उसका विलगाव नहीं होता। वह उसी प्रकार प्रकृतिस्थ मन और पाँच ज्ञानेन्द्रियों को खींच कर अपने साथ ले जाता है जिस प्रकार वायु (पुष्प आदि) आश्रय से गन्ध को अपने साथ ले जाता है:

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।
मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति।।
शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः।।
ग्रहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात्।। (गीता 15.7,8)

अतः यह शास्त्रोक्त सिद्धान्त है कि मृत्यु के पश्चात् आत्मा के साथ ही लिंग शरीर जाता है, जो समस्त कर्मफलात्मक संस्कारों को साथ ले जाता है। इस लिंग शरीर में जिन तत्वों का समावेश है, उनमें बुद्धितत्व ही प्रधान है। बुद्धि का 'व्यापार', 'धर्म' या 'विकार' ही 'कर्म' है। सांख्यवादी इस को 'भाव भी कह गए हैं; उनके अनुसार यह 'भाव' लिंग शरीर में उसी प्रकार लगा रहता है जिस तरह फूल में गन्ध या कपड़े में रंग लगा रहता है। यह कहना कठिन है कि नामरूपात्मक जड़–जगत् की स्थिति कब से है। यह अनादि है अतः कर्म प्रवाह भी अनादि है। बृहदारण्यक (1,6,–1) में नाम, रूप और कर्म इन तीनों को एकात्म कहा गया है। सांख्यवादी और वेदान्ती दोनों ही कर्म के तत्व होने में मतभेद रखते हैं तथापि कर्म प्रवाह को अनादि

ही मानते हैं। आत्मा को जब अपनी और प्रकृति या माया की वास्तविक सत्ता का ज्ञान हो जाता है तभी वह कर्मबन्ध से मुक्त हो जाता है।

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा।। (गी० 4.37)

ज्ञान की अग्नि समस्त कर्मों को भस्मसात् कर देती है। ब्रह्म को सत्यस्वरूप, ज्ञानस्वरूप और आनन्द स्वरूप मानने के कारण ज्ञान को एक विशेष महत्त्व प्राप्त है। 'सा विद्या या विमुक्तये' – विद्या वही है जो मुक्ति का कारण बने, जो मनुष्य को कर्म–बन्धन से छुटकारा दिला दे।

कर्म के तीन प्रकार बताए गए हैं: संचित्कर्म, प्रारब्धकर्म और क्रियामान कर्म। ज्ञान होने पर संचित्कर्म नष्ट हो जाते हैं, परन्तु प्रारब्धकर्म को भोगना ही पड़ता है और ज्ञानी जन तदनुसार उसी प्रकार का शरीर धारण किए रहता है। प्रकारान्तर से यह कहा जा सकता है कि चूंकि आत्मा नित्य है, आत्मा ही शरीर धारण करता है, शरीर वैभिन्य होते हुए भी यह अमर है क्योंकि यह अजन्मा है, नित्य, सनातन और पुरातन है; शरीर के मारे जाने पर भी यह नहीं मारा जाता। शरीर धारियों में अमर या चिरजीवी सात गिनाए गए हैं।

अश्वत्थामा बलिर्व्यासो हनुमनश्च विभीषणः।
कृपाचार्यं च परशुरामं सप्तैता चिरजीवनाम्।।
(अश्वत्थामा, बली, व्यास, हनुमान, विभीषण, कृपाचार्य और परशुराम)

शरीरधारी की मृत्यु तीन प्रकार से संभव होती है: जरा से, रोग से, या दुर्घटना से।

जरा पर अकुंश पाने के लिए नित्य वैज्ञानिक आविष्कार/जानकारी प्राप्त हो रही है और जरा को नियन्त्रित करने से संबंधित शोध में विश्व के वैज्ञानिक जुटे हुए हैं। इसी प्रकार जो रोग असाध्य रूप से मृत्यु कारक हैं, उनके उपचार ढूँढे जा रहे हैं। दुर्घटना पर कभी भी पूर्ण रूपेण नियन्त्रण करना मनुष्य की सामर्थ्य से बाहर है। अतः कह सकते हैं कि अमरत्व

प्रत्येक प्राणी प्राप्त कर सकता है यदि हम आप्त ज्ञान की चर्चा न भी करें तो। परामनोविज्ञान अपेक्षाकृत नूतन विद्या है; इसके अध्येताओं ने अनेक अनुसंधान करके चौंकाने वाले तथ्य प्रस्तुत किए हैं। विश्वास के क्षेत्र में अनेक उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किए गए हैं जिन से यह सिद्ध किया जा सकता है कि शारीरिक रूप से मृत व्यक्ति मृत्यु के बीसोंवर्षों पश्चात् जीवन के दौरान परिचित रूपाकार में चलता–फिरता देखा गया है। महामाहेश्वराचार्य राम और भगवान् गोपीनाथ के प्रत्यक्ष दर्शन की घटनाएँ अभी बहुत प्राचीन नहीं हुई हैं।

सर्वसाधारण के लिए ऐसी अवस्था जिसको अमरत्व कहते हैं, अभी दूर तो है परन्तु आशा और सम्भावना की परिधि में है।

अमर छा मरान

– श्री ओंकार नाथ शास्त्री

अमर का वास्तविक अर्थ है जो कभी मृत्यु को प्राप्त न हो, न मरने वाला, अविनाशी, नित्य। भगवान् कृष्ण भगवद्गीता की दूसरी अध्याय में कहते हैं:

'न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे'

अर्थात् – शरीर के मारने पर शरीरी (आत्मा) मरती नहीं है। ये दो चीज़े हैं, शरीर और शरीरी। मांस का बना हुआ पिण्ड, इस को शरीर कहते हैं परन्तु इस के अन्दर जो बसा है वह 'आत्मा' है जो अमर है, वह केवल इस चोले को बदलता है। इसी प्रकार संसार में दो पदार्थ हैं, देह, जिस को शरीर कहते हैं, दूसरा जिस को जीवात्मा कहा जाता है। शरीर उत्पन्न होते हैं और नष्ट होते हैं परन्तु आत्मा अविनाशी और अजन्मा है। देह की उत्पत्ति के साथ आत्मा जन्म नहीं लेती है और शरीर के नष्ट होने पर आत्मा नष्ट नहीं होती है, शरीर मिले या न मिले तो भी आत्मा अनन्त तथा नित्य है। सबसे पहले यह सिद्ध करने को प्रयत्न करेंगे कि 'आत्मा' क्या है? जीवात्मा क्या हैं? शरीर क्या है? इस शरीर में से कौन सा तत्व या शक्ति निकलती है जिस से प्राणी मरता है।

पं० प्रेमनाथ शास्त्री के विचार आत्मा के विषय में:–

"एक कमरे में दीवार पर एक आईना टंगा हुआ था इस कमरे में एक बच्चा आ गया और आते ही आईने को दोनों हाथों से पकड़ा और अपना प्रतिबिम्ब देख कर बहुत खुश हुआ। यह देखते–देखते उसके हाथों से यह आईना नीचे गिरा और टूट गया। इस बच्चे ने फरश से एक शीशे का टुकड़ा उठाया और उस में भी उसको अपना प्रतिबिम्ब दिखाई दिया इसी प्रकार इसने बहुत से शीशे के टुकड़े उठाये और वह हर टुकड़े में अपना प्रतिबिम्ब देखता रहा। आईना टूटने से बच्चे के प्रतिबिम्ब पर कोई प्रभाव नहीं पड़ा, आईना टूटने से प्रतिबिम्ब टूटा नहीं। इसी प्रकार आप मानिये

आईने का फ्रेम स्थूल शरीर है, आईने में बच्चे का प्रतिबिम्ब जीवात्मा है बच्चा परमात्मा है जिसका प्रतिबिम्ब आईने में है आईना सूक्ष्म शरीर है''।

सूक्ष्म शरीर के विषय में विद्यारण्य ने कहा है:–

बुद्धि कर्मेन्द्रिय प्राण पंचकैः मनसा धिया।
शरीरं सप्त दशभिः सूक्ष्मं तत् लिंगमुच्यते।।

अर्थः– पाँच कर्मेन्द्रिय, पाँच प्राण, पाँच ज्ञानेन्द्रियाँ, मन तथ बुद्धि, इन '17' पदार्थों को सूक्ष्म शरीर कहते हैं उनके जो सूक्ष्म तत्व हैं वही शरीर से निकलते हैं उनके निकलने से ही चेतना समाप्त हो जाती है। इसी सूक्ष्म शरीर को जीवन भर के किए हुये अच्छे या बुरे संस्कार लगे हुये होते हैं फिर यही सूक्ष्म शरीर अच्छे या बुरे संस्कारों सहित प्रकृति के नियम के अनुसार नया जन्म धारण करता है। यह सूक्ष्म शरीर जिस किसी देह में पहुंचता है उसको हर स्थान पर परमात्मा का प्रकाश व्याप्त होने के कारण वहां पर भी परमात्मा का प्रतिबिम्ब होता ही है जिस को जीवात्मा कहते हैं। जिस प्रतिबिम्ब से यह सूक्ष्म शरीर चेतना प्राप्त करता है उसी को आत्मा कहते हैं जो अमर है। इसके विषय में उपनिषद् कहता है:–

न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चि–
न्नायं कुताश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित्।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ।।क०उ०18।।
हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुं
हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम्।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो
नायं हन्ति न हन्यते।।क०उ० 19।।

अर्थात्: यह आत्मा न जन्मती है न मरती है। यह कहीं नहीं रहती ऐसा भी नहीं है। यह अजन्मा नित्य, शाश्वत और पुरातन है। शरीर के नाश होने पर भी इसका नाश नहीं होता है। मारने वाला यदि इसको मारने की इच्छा

करे और मारने वाला भी यदि अपने आप को मारा गया माने तो उन दोनों को सही ज्ञान नहीं है, यह न मारता है और न मारा जाता है। इस के विषय में भगवद्गीता में सविस्तार लिखा हुआ है। जब कुरु–भूमि में भीष्म पितामह के शंख नाद करने पर कौरव और पाण्डव सेना के बाजे, ढोल इत्यादि बजने लगे तो भगवान् कृष्ण ने दोनों सेनाओं के मध्य अपना रथ खड़ा किया, दोनो सेनाओं में अपने सम्बन्धियों, गुरुजनों, मित्रों को देख कर वीर अर्जुन में कौटम्बिक मोह जाग्रत हुआ जिस के परिणाम स्वरूप अर्जुन बाण सहित धनुष को त्याग करके रथ के मध्य बाग में बैठ कर भगवान् कृष्ण से कहने लगा – हे मधुसूदन! माता, पिता, गुरु, अपने से बड़ों आदि की सेवा करना हमारा परम धर्म है न कि उनका वध करना। रण क्षेत्र में मेरे पूज्य पितामह हैं जिन्होंने मुझे बचपन में पाला है, मेरे गुरुदवे जिन से मैंने सब विद्या प्राप्त की है, क्या मैं इन पर बाण से वार करूं? मैं ऐसे पूजनीय महापुरुषों को मार कर कभी भी सुख की अनुभूति नहीं करूगां। हे मधुसूदन! मैं इनको मारूँ या रण क्षेत्र को छोड़ कर भाग जाउँ? इस प्रकार के प्रश्नों से मेरे अन्दर की वीरवृति नष्ट हुई है इस समय क्या करना चाहिये, और क्या न करना चाहिये मेरे समझ से बहुत दूर है। भगवद्गीता की पहली अध्याय के 24वें श्लोक में 'गुडाकेश' तथा 'हृषीकेश' कहा गया है। हृषीकेश' का वास्तविक अर्थ है 'इन्द्रियों' का ईश, स्वामी, जो अपनी इन्द्रियों को अपने वश में रख सकता है, जो इिन्द्रयों के अधीन नहीं रहता, जो इन्द्रियो को अपने वश मे रख कर अच्छे कार्यों में लगाता है वह 'हृषीकेश' कहलाता है।

इसी प्रकार 'गुडाकेश' का वास्तविक अर्थ है 'निद्रा का स्वामी अर्थात् जिसने निद्रा, सुस्ती, आलस्य इत्यादि दोषों को जीत लिया हो, कार्य करने के समय जिस को सुस्ती या निद्रा नहीं आती हो उसको 'गुडाकेश' कहते हैं। अर्जुन को युद्ध का डर नहीं था उन को विश्वास था कि युद्ध आरम्भ होने पर उसकी जीत् होगी और सब का संहार अवश्य होगा अर्थात् भीष्म,

द्रोण तथा अन्यान्य परम पूज्य पुरुष मारे जाएंगे। अर्जुन के मन में अपने सम्बन्धियों, परम पूज्य पुरुषों के वध का भयानक चित्र सामने आया और वीर अर्जुन भी कर्त्तव्य से पीछे हट गया। खेद, मोह, दया, कृपा आदि से शरीर की शक्ति घट जाती है। बड़ा शक्तिशाली वीर भी निर्बल हो जाता है; वीर अर्जुन भी निर्बल हो गया। जैसे भ्रमर सूखी तथा कठिन लकड़ी में छेद करता है परन्तु जब वह भ्रमर कमल में रात के समय बन्द हो जाता है तो वह कमल की कोमल पत्ती को काट नहीं सकता हैं यहां तक कि वह अपने प्राण भी वहीं त्यागता है। इस प्रकार अर्जुन की दुर्बलता देख कर भगवान् कृष्ण भी आश्चर्य में पड़ गये।

इस विषय में 'छान्दोग्य–उपनिषद्' कहता हैः–

> द्वे वाव ब्रह्मणो रूपे मूर्तं चैवामूर्तं च मर्त्यं चामृतं च।
> इदमेव मूर्तं यदन्यत्प्राणात्।
> अथामूर्तं प्राणश्च यश्चायमन्तरात्मन्नाकाश एतदमृतम्।
>
> (छा. उप–2–3–1)

अर्थात्ः 'ब्रह्म' के दो रूप हैं (1) अमूर्त और अमर (2) मूर्त और मर्त्य। प्राण से भिन्न जो इन्द्रियां और शरीर आदि हैं वे 'मूर्त' अर्थात् साकार हैं और मर्त्य अर्थात् मरने वाले हैं। जो अमूर्त प्राण आदि हैं वे निराकार हैं और अमर हैं। इसमें स्पष्ट रूप से कहा गया है कि मनुष्य के अन्दर मरने वाला एक भाग है दूसरा भाग अमर है। मरने वाला भाग साकार और स्थूल है तथा न मरने वाला भाग 'अमर' है जो निराकार और सूक्ष्म है। इससे सिद्ध होता है जो अमर भाग है जिस को हम 'आत्मा' कहते हैं वह शरीर के नाश के पश्चात् भी रहने वाला है और शरीर के जन्म के पूर्व भी वह था। जो शरीर के जन्म के पूर्व होता है और शरीर के मरने के पश्चात् भी रहता है वही 'आत्मा' है, जो अमर है।

यही दर्शाने के लिये भगवान् श्री कृष्ण जी ने कहा 'तू' 'मैं' और 'ये' सब पहले भी थे, इस समय हैं और आगे भी रहेंगे, अर्थात् हम में से कोई भी न शरीर के जन्म के साथ जन्मा है और न शरीर की मृत्यु से मरेगा अतः हम

सब नित्य हैं तात्पर्य यही है कि शरीर में रहने वाली 'आत्मा' अमर है और शरीर नाशवान है। इस विषय में श्रुति भी कहती है:–

आकाशवत् सर्वगतश्च नित्यः
वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवितिष्ठत्येकः।
निष्कलं निष्क्रियं शान्तम्।।

अर्थात्: यह आत्मा आकाश के समान सर्वव्यापक और नित्य है वृक्ष के समान अचल, अपने स्वप्रकाश स्वरूप में स्थित, अद्वितीय, निरवयव, निष्क्रिय और शान्त स्वरूप है।

महाभारत में इस विषय का समर्थन करते हुये लिखा है:–

यथा हि पुरुषः शालां पुनः सम्प्रविशेन्नवाम्।
एवं जीवः शरीराणि तानि तानि प्रपद्यते।।57।।
देहान्पुराणनुत्सृत्य नवान्संप्रतिपद्यते।
एवं मृत्यु मुखं प्राहुर्जना ये तत्त्वदर्शिनेः।।58।।

(मा.भा. शां. अ० 15)

अर्थात्: जैसे मनुष्य नये घर में प्रवेश करता है वैसे ही जीवात्मा नये नये शरीरों को प्राप्त करता है और पुराने शरीरों को छोड़ता है। इस प्रकार आत्मा अनादि, अनन्त और नित्य है शरीर के नाश से आत्मा की न्यूनाधिकता नहीं होती है। इस विषय में भगवद्गीता कहती है:–

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः।। भ.गी. 3–42

अर्थात्: शरीर से इन्द्रिया परे हैं, इन्द्रियों से मन परे, मन से बुद्धि परे है और जो बुद्धि से भी परे है वह 'आत्मा' है जो 'अमर' है।

लल्लेश्वरी इस विषय में कहती हैं:–

कुस मरि तय कसू मारन।
मरि कुस तय मारन कस।।

संस्कृत पद्यानुवादः

को नाम मृत्योर्वशगो भविष्यति

कः कस्य हन्ता भ्रममात्रमेव।।

भगवदगीता भी इस वाक्य का समर्थन करती है

"देही नित्यमवध्योयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत"

अर्थात्: हे अर्जुन! शरीर में रहने वाला जीवात्मा अवध्य है जिसे मारा नहीं जा सकता है।

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः

न चैनं कल्येदयन्त्यापो न शोष्यति मारुतः।। (भ.गी. 2–23)

अर्थात्: इस आत्मा को शस्त्र नहीं काट सकते, इसको आग नहीं जला सकती इसको जल गीला नहीं कर सकता और न वायु सुखा सकता है इस से यह सिद्ध होता है कि 'आत्मा' अमर है।

कठोपनिषद् भी इसका इस प्रकार समर्थन करता हैः–

न प्राणे नापानेन मर्त्यो जीवति कश्चन।

इतरेण तु जीवन्ति यस्मिन्नेतावुपश्रितौ।। (क.उप. 5.5)

अर्थात्: प्राण और अपान से मनुष्य जीवित नही रहता किसी अन्य शक्ति के कारण ही मनुष्य जीवित रहता है। जिस में प्राण और अपान टिके हुये होते हैं उसी शक्ति को 'आत्मा' कहते हैं जो नित्य और 'अमर' है।

अथर्व–वेद में इस बात का समर्थन इस प्रकार किया गया है।

सनातनमेनमाहुरुताद्य स्यात्पुनर्णवः।।26।।

स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उतवा कुमारी।

त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वञ्चसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतो मुखः।।27।।

उतैषां पितोत वा पुत्र एषामुतैषां ज्येष्ठ अत वा कनिष्ठः।

एको ह देवो मनसि प्रविष्ठः प्रथमो जातः स उ गर्भे अन्तः।।28।। (अथर्व वेद 10–8)

अर्थात्: 'आत्मा' सनातन है यह पुनः पुनः नवीन जैसा होता है। (26) तू स्त्री

है पुरुष भी है, तू कुमार है और कुमारी भी है। वृद्ध होने पर तू हाथ में सोटी लेकर चलता है और जब तू नवीन जन्म लेता है तब तू सर्वत्र देखता है। (27)

तू इनका पिता है और पुत्र है इन में ज्येष्ठ है और कनिष्ठ भी है, मन में प्रविष्ट होकर टिका हुआ तू एक ही देव है। पहले जन्मा था वही अब गर्भ में पुनः आ गया। (28) इसका तात्पर्य यही है कि 'आत्मा' नित्य है अविनाशी है अर्थात् 'अमर' है। इसी प्रकार श्वेताश्वतर उपनिषद् का एक मन्त्र इस बात का समर्थन करता है :—

स एषो ह देवः प्रदिशोऽनु सर्वाः पूर्वो ह जातः स उ गर्भे अन्तः।
स एव जातः स जनिष्यमाणः प्रत्यङ् जनास्तिष्ठति सर्वतो मुखः।।
(श्वे 2–6 वा.य. 32–4)

अर्थात्ः यही प्रकाश–मान आत्मा सब दिशाओं में है, वह पहले जन्मा था, वही फिर गर्भ में आया है। वह एक बार जन्मा हुआ भविष्य में पुनः जन्म लेगा। यह हर एक मनुष्य में रहता है। इस का मुख सब ओर है अर्थात् जितने मनुष्य अथवा प्राणी हैं उतने में सब इसे मुख ही है। इसी कारण इसको 'मातरिश्वा' अर्थात् माता के गर्भ में रहने वाला कहते हैं इस से सिद्ध होता है कि आत्मा 'अमर' है।

'आत्मा' की नित्यता के विषय में नचिकेता ने यम से पूछा कि मरने के पश्चात् क्या अवशेष रहता है? तो यम ने उसका उत्तर इस प्रकार दियाः

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयान्
आत्मस्य जन्तोर्निहतो गुहायाम्। क.उप. 2–20

अर्थात्'– सूक्ष्म से सूक्ष्म और महान् से भी महान् आत्मा इस प्राणी के हृदय रूपी गुफा में है। मरने के पश्चात् रहने वाला विभुः 'आत्मा' रहता है जो नित्य और अमर है।

इस प्रकार भगवदगीता, उपनिषद, श्रुति तथा वेद इत्यादि के तथ्यों को सत्य की कसौटी पर परखने से सिद्ध होता है कि 'अमर छु न मरान'।

प्रसंग : अमर छा ज़ांह मरान

— डा० महाराज कृष्ण संतोषी

गीता में कहा गया है–

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्

यः प्रयाति स मद्भावम् याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः

अर्थात अन्त काल में जो प्राणी मुझ ही को स्मरण करता हुआ देह त्याग देता है, वह मेरे भाव को प्राप्त होता है। यह 'भाव' ही वह अमरता है जिसकी अभिलाषा हर प्राणी करता है। पर यह तभी सम्भव है जब प्राणी सब समयों में परमात्मा का ही स्मरण करे और 'मन–बुद्धि' दोनों अपर्ण करें।

श्रीकृष्ण कहते हैं।

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु माम् अनुस्मर युध्य च

मयि अर्पित मनो बुद्धिः माम् एवं एष्यसि असंशयम्।

भारतीय चिन्तन में मृत्यु जीवन का अन्त नहीं अपितु एक नई शुरुआत है। यह मात्र आत्मा का देह परित्याग है। आत्मा तो अजर है। अमर है। पर जब प्राणी यह मानने लगता है कि "मैं हूँ" तभी वह मृत्यु से घबराने लगता है और इस मृत्यु से बचने के लिए धर्म की शरण में चला जाता है। यह 'मैं' 'हूँ' का भाव अहंकार के कारण पैदा होता है। ओशो ने इस 'मैं' के बारे में कहा है 'मैं का अर्थ होता है, मैं इस विराट अस्तित्व से अलग–थलग हूँ" इस बात को इस तरह से भी कहा जा सकता है कि जब लहर स्वयं को सागर से अलग माने। वैसे लहर तभी तक क्षणिक है जब तक वह क्षणिक है जब तक वह स्वयं को सागर से अलग माने। नहीं तो लहर के लघु अस्तित्व में समुद्र का विराट अस्तित्व छिपा है।

विश्व के किसी भी दर्शन में मृत्यु के बारे में इतना चिंतन नहीं हुआ होगा जितना भारतीय दर्शन में। मृत्यु के रहस्य को जानना समझना और इसे नए जन्म के रूप में देखना और जीवन का विस्तार मानना अपने आप

में अमरता का विश्वास पैदा करता है। इसी विश्वास के कारण भारतीय चिंतन में देह को इतना महत्त्व नहीं दिया गया है। देह के प्रति आसक्ति ही मृत्यु का डर पैदा करती है। इस भय से मुक्ति ही अमरता का बोध कराती है। भारतीय आध्यात्मिक साहित्य में मृत्यु को कबीर जैसे संत कवि ने मिथ्या भ्रम मात्र माना है।

वे कहते है!

कहें कबीर गुरु ब्रह्म दिखाया
मरता जाता नज़रि न आया।

अर्थात गुरु ने मुझे तत्व के दर्शन करा दिए हैं जो न मर कर कहीं जाता हुआ नहीं दिखाई पड़ता है। अपने एक पद में वह यह दृढ विश्वास प्रकट करते हैं कि अगर कोई मरना जानता है तो फिर उसके लिए "मरन है मीठा"

पंचतत्त्व अविकारी भगवान से उत्पन्न होते हैं और वे परम तत्त्व से विछुड़ कर फिर उसी रूप में समा जाते हैं। कबीर कहते हैं कि यह ऐसी ही बात हुई जैसे 'जल में कुंभ, कुम्भ में जल है, बाहरि भीतरि पानी...'

ज्ञानी लोग कहते हैं, संसार की तीन अवस्थाओं अर्थात आदि,
मध्य और अंत तीनों में बह्म ही व्याप्त है।

इसी लिए वे मानते हैं –

हम न मरै मरिहै संसारा
हम कूँ मिल्या जियावन हारा'

अर्थात हम नहीं मरेंगे। यह संसार ही मर जाएगा। हमें तो जियाने वाला मिल गया है।

उपनिषद् में मानव शरीर को ही आत्मा मानने वालों को राक्षस कहा जाता था। देवत्व आत्मा की अनश्वरता में विश्वास का नाम है। सांसारिक रूप में मृत्यु जीवन का अंत भले ही माना जाए लेकिन आध्यात्मिक रूप में वह केवल शरीर का ही अंत है और उसके साथ भौतिक पदार्थों का नष्ट

होना भी। अपने जीवन में प्राणी केवल चीज़ों को ही अर्जित करता है और उम्र के साथ साथ वह अहं के भाव में आकर यह भी मानने लगता है कि यह सब मेरा है।

स्वामित्व के इस भाव के कारण ही प्राणी में मृत्यु के प्रति भय पैदा होता है। यह भय बिछुड़ने के भाव से जुड़ा है। इसी लिए भारतीय अध्यात्तम में त्याग की भावना विकसित करने पर बल दिया जाता है। लेकिन यह त्याग की भावना अनासक्ति के भाव से ही आ सकती है। गीता में जब भगवान कृष्ण कहते हैं–

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संङ्ग त्यक्त्वा धनंजय

तो वह 'बेलगाव अमल की ही बात करते हैं। कर्म तक ही प्राणी का अधिकार है और फल की चिन्ता उसके अधिकार से बाहर है। इस निष्काम कर्म के सिद्धांत का प्रतिपादन करके भगवान कृष्ण अनासक्ति के भाव को ही विकसित करते हैं ताकि कुछ खोने का भाव न आजाए। मृत्यु जब तक इस खोने के भय से जुड़ी रहेगी तो वह प्राणी में सिहरन पैदा करेगी। जब वह इसे नई यात्रा का आरम्भ मानेगा तो मृत्यु और जीवन में भेद मिट जाता है। वहीं से देवत्व भी शुरु होगा और अमरता का बोध भी।

कबीर कहते है–

अब न मरूँ मरनै मन जाना
तेई मुए जिनि राम न जाना

अर्थात वे ही मरे हैं जिन्होंने परमात्मा को नहीं जाना। आत्मा और परमात्मा का अभेद ही अमरता है।

महामौन के साधक भगवान गोपीनाथजी

— डा. महाराजकृष्ण भरत

एक बार धर्मराज युधिष्ठर से यक्ष ने यह प्रश्न पूछा था कि संसार में सबसे बड़ी आश्चर्यजनक बात क्या हैं? तब युधिष्ठर ने उत्तर देते हुए कहा था कि 'अपने जीवनकाल में चारों ओर मृत्यु का ही दृष्य देखने के बाद भी मनुष्य को यह अटल विश्वास होता है कि केवल वह ही मृत्युहीन है। मनुष्य का ऐसा सोचना ही अपने आपमें आश्चर्यजनक है।' इस मृत्युलोक में जन्म लेने वाला मनुष्य भले ही किसी कालावधि तक ऐसा भ्रम पाले पर 'जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्यु' अर्थात् जो जन्मता है उसकी मृत्यु तो अवश्यंभावी है। इस पृथ्वी पर कितनी ही वस्तुओं, पदार्थों की उत्पत्ति हुई है, कितने ही पराक्रमी सम्राट, विद्वान, नेता और सामान्य मनुष्य आए और एक दिन इस प्रकृति में विलीन हो गए। जल, वायु, अग्नि, आकाश, पृथ्वी जैसे पंच तत्त्वों से बना शरीर फिर इन्ही में समा जाता है, केवल परमात्मा अविनाशी है और देहधारी मनुष्य में परमात्मा के अंश के रूप में वास करने वाली आत्मा अजर, अमर और शाश्वत है। इसी जीवात्मा के तत्त्वबोध का साक्षात्कार करने वाले भगवान गोपीनाथजी ने इस भौतिक शरीर को त्यागने से पूर्व एक भक्तजन को अपने अंतिम संदेश में गुरुमंत्र देते हुए कहा था, 'अमर छा मरान' (क्या अमर मरता है?)

3 जुलाई 1898 (आषाढ़ शुक्ल द्वादशी) को जम्मू–कश्मीर राज्य के पुरातन ऐतिहासिक–धार्मिक–सांस्कृतिक नगर श्रीनगर में जन्में भगवान गोपीनाथ जी 28 मई 1968 (ज्येष्ठ शुक्ल द्वितीया) को महाप्रयाण कर गए। उन्हें यह पूर्वाभास हो चुका था कि अब जीवात्मा का परमात्मा से एकाकार होने का समय आ चुका है। इस रहस्य का जब भक्तों को ज्ञान हुआ तो वे शोकाकुल हो गए। भक्तजनों की उदासी को भांपते हुए ही भगवान गोपीनाथ ने उन्हें गीता जी के निम्न श्लोक का सही ज्ञान कराया था:—

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः'' (अ.2 श्लो.23)

'अमर छा मरान' (क्या अमर मरता है?) – अनमोल वचन के भीतर जो अर्थ छिपा है वह यही बोध कराता है कि अमरत्व की मृत्यु नहीं होती। फिर अमर क्या है? – शरीर! नहीं; अमर है शरीर के भीतर अवस्थित आत्मा जो परमात्मा के अंश रूप में मनुष्य के साथ रहती है पर हम उस आत्मारूपी अलौकिक प्रकाश को सम्पूर्ण जगत में वैसे ही ढूढंते फिरते हैं जैसे एक मृग नाभि में छिपे सुगंधित पदार्थ को पाने के लिए वन में भटकता फिरता है।

परमश्रद्धेय स्वामी जी श्रीरामसुखराम जी ने श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता की हिन्दी टीका लिखते हुए परिशिष्ट भाव में इस श्लोक की विवेचना करते हुए लिखा है कि ''वास्तव में मरने वाला (परिवर्तनशील) ही मरता है? रहने वाला कभी मरता ही नहीं है। यह सब का प्रत्यक्ष अनुभव है कि मृत्यु होने पर शरीर तो हमारे सामने पड़ा रहता है, पर शरीर का मालिक (जीवात्मा) निकल जाता है।'' भगवान गोपीनाथ जी ने भी गीता जी के मर्म को अपने में आत्मसात करते हुए उस अलौकिक तत्व की बात की है जो सदैव अजर, अमर है। वह जीवात्मा 'शरीरी' है शरीर नहीं। इस आत्मा को शस्त्रादि काट नहीं सकते, अग्नि इसे जला नहीं सकती, जल इसको गीला नहीं कर सकता, और वायु इसको सुखा नहीं सकती।

अमर, शरीर में आत्मा के रूप में परमात्मा की दिव्य अनुभूति है। अपने भीतर की इसी दिव्य ज्योति का ज्ञान बोधिवृक्ष के नीचे जब सिद्धार्थ को हुआ था तो वह भगवान बुद्ध कहलाए थे और जब आत्मा–परमात्मा के इस अलौकिक मिलन की दिव्य अनुभूति भक्त प्रह्लाद ने कराई थी तो भगवान नरसिंह अवतार का प्रगटीकरण हुआ था। ऐसे ही जब भान परिवार में जन्में गोपीनाथजी ने वर्षों की गहन साथना में रत बाहर से भीतर को खोज की और आत्मा के दिव्य, अलौकिक प्रकाश पुंज का साक्षात्कार किया जो भक्त उन्हें 'भगवान' पुकारने लगे। एक भक्त ही को भगवान के अस्तित्व का

आभास होता है जैसे धन्ना जाट के हठ के आगे तो भगवान को पत्थर में से प्रकट होना पड़ा, जो पत्थर उसे एक पुजारी ने मंदिर परिसर से यह कहते हुए उठाकर दिया था कि इस में भगवान का वास है।

साफा बांधे, तिलक लगाए, अपने आसन पर सदा विराजमान ब्रह्मस्वरूप भगवान गोपीनाथ जी मौन चिन्तन में तल्लीन रहते थे, भीतर के अलौकिक आनन्द देने वाले स्वर में निमग्न। आनन्द से परमानन्द की अवस्था को पार करते हुए भगवान जी इहलौकिक प्राणियों का दुख हरने के लिए सम्मुख बैठे भक्तों को भी मन चाहा आशीर्वचन देते रहते थे। कश्मीरी एवं हिन्दी भाषा एवं साहित्य के मर्मज्ञ एवं कश्मीर विश्वविद्यालय के स्नातकोत्तर हिन्दी विभाग के पूर्व अध्यक्ष प्रो० भूषन लाल कौल द्वारा सम्पादित पुस्तक–''कश्मीर की संत परम्परा'' में प्रो. कौल ने भगवान गोपीनाथ के आध्यात्मिक जीवन दर्शन को सामने लाते हुए 'भगवान' शब्द को भी परिभाषित किया है। आलेख में वर्णित है कि ''बबॅजी साक्षात् प्रभु स्वरूप में भगवान के सूक्ष्म अद्‌भुत आभास का प्रगटीकरण करने लगे।... इस प्रकार मुक्तात्मा होकर अद्‌भुत ज्योति पुंज के रूप में सबका ध्यान अपनी ओर आकर्षित करने लगे।'' भगवान जी के समक्ष निरन्तर धूनी जलती रहती थी। संगीत के प्रति उनका आकर्षण था क्योंकि संगीत में ही ईश्वरीय तत्त्व का आभास होता है। भजन–कीर्तन में ही व्यक्ति मन की शांति को पा लेता है।

भगवान जी प्रवचन नहीं देते थे, वरन् अन्तर्मुखी होकर प्रायः मौन ही रहते थे। भीतर के मौन को साधते रहते थे, महामौन की यात्रा तक पहुंचने के लिए, महामौन मे ही परमात्मा का वास है। भगवान गोपीनाथ जी इसी माहमौन के साधक थे जहां से परमात्मा की सूक्ष्म तरंगे उनमें संचरित हुई दृष्टिगोचर होती थीं, जिसका आभास तब उनके स्थूल शरीर के समक्ष सच्चे भक्तों को होता था और अब सूक्ष्म रूप में इन आध्यात्मिक तरंगों और उनके होने का एहसास उनके 'परमधाम' में मिलता है। यह उनकी

साधानावस्था का ही प्रतिफलन था कि वे अपने आसन पर स्थूल शरीर के रूप में समाधिस्थ रहते थे और उनका सूक्ष्म शरीर सीमातीत होकर ब्रह्माण्ड में विचरण करने लगता था, तभी तो साई बाबा ने एक रोगी को भगवान गोपीनाथ जी के दर्शन करने को कहा था, तभी तो मन की थाह लेकर उन्होंने 1957 में बनारस से आए एक आचार्य महोदय को 'परमधाम' की अवस्था का परिज्ञान कराया था। गीता जी के 15वें अध्याय को उद्धृत करते हुए भगवान जी ने एक जिज्ञासु आचार्य को अपनी अवस्था का दर्शन कराया था, जहां तक विरले ही पहुंच पाते हैं:—

"न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम''

अर्थात् उस स्वयं प्रकाशमय परमपद को न सूर्य प्रकाशित कर सकता है, न चन्द्रमा, न अग्नि, जिस परमधाम को प्राप्त कर मनुष्य आवागमन के चक्कर से मुक्त हो जाता है। वही मेरा परमधाम है।

यह उनका सूक्ष्म शरीर ही है जो 1947—48 के कबाईली आक्रमण; भारत—चीन, भारत—पाक युद्ध के दौरान सिपाहियों को दिशा देते हुए सीमाओं की रक्षार्थ प्रेरणास्रोत बना था और करगिल युद्ध के समय भी उनकी दिव्य अनुभूति का एहसास हुआ था।

मानव जीवन कल्याणकारी कार्यों के लिए मिला है, पर हम में से कई मार्ग में भटक जाते हैं और हमारे भीतर मनोविकार उत्पन्न हो जाते हैं। हम द्वेष, घृणा, ईर्ष्या, अहं, स्वार्थ, अविश्वास से ग्रस्त होकर अपने मानवीय गुणों को ही भूल जाते हैं या फिर जानबूझकर शाश्वत सत्य के मर्म की अवहेलना करने लगते हैं। हम विराट के साथ अपना मेल करने लगते हैं, जहां हमारा अस्तित्व न के बराबर होता है। मृत्युलोक के वासियों को यह कभी नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि एक दिन हमें इस संसार को छोड़ कर जाना है। हमें भगान गोपीनाथजी के प्रतिष्ठापित परमधाम में आत्मसमर्पण कर जीवन के सद्मार्ग की खोज में प्रवृत्त रहना चाहिए। भगवान गोपीनाथ अपने आत्मज्ञान, शक्ति, यश, वीर्य, श्री तथा तेज के अद्भुत गुणों से जिस पदवी

तक पहुच पाए हैं वहां तक कश्मीर का कोई भी संत पहुंच न सका। भगवान गोपीनाथ जी सूक्ष्म शरीर में आज, भी अजर अमर हैं, और भक्तों पर नित्यप्रति कृपा करते रहते हैं।

अमर मरता नहीं

— बिमला रैना

परमात्मा अमर, अजर, गोचर, अगोचर है। आत्मा उसी परमात्मा का अंश है। यह जगत पंच महाभूतों, वायु, जल, अग्नि, पृथ्वी, आकाश से बना हुआ है। इन्हीं पंच महाभूतों से यह शरीर भी बना हुआ है। वास्तव में हर वस्तु (रूप) आकार बदलते हैं पर द्रव्य का नाश नहीं होता, यह सारा जगत–प्रपंच परमात्मा का ही स्वरूप है। परमात्मा सदा अमर है, अमर मरता नहीं। जैसे जल बर्फ़ का स्वरूप लेता है फिर जल का रूप धारण करता है और फ़िर बर्फ़ का। काया जल कर पृथ्वी तत्व बन जाती है। वायु वायु से अग्नि अग्नी से और जल जल से और आत्मा परमात्मा से मिल जाते हैं पर नाश किसी का नहीं होता। जो गुण पृथ्वी अथवा आकाश में है, वे ही गुण हम में भी हैं। गुण गुणों से मिलते हैं। जीव केवल आकार बदलते हैं। जैसे सुनार सोने को कंगन, हार या अन्य आभूषणों के आकारों में गढ़ लेता है, पर वे आभूषण पिघलाने पर पुनः मूल रूप से सोना ही रह जाता है। उसी प्रकार यह जगत मूल रूप से परमात्मा का ही स्वरूप है।

इस संदर्भ में यह वाख प्रस्तुत हैः–

(क०) मॅचे़ मॅचुय वुछिम क्वछे।
मॅचे़ मॅचुय ख्यावान ज़ुव।।
मॅचे़ वुछिम मॅचि़ हुंज़ ब्वछे।
मॅचुय मॊचि़थ ज़ोनुम शिव।। (लेखका)

मिटी मिटी में मिल कर पुनः मिटी बनजाती है लोहा पिघल कर पुनः लोहा ही रह जाता है इसी प्रकार इस संसार को नाशवान कहते हैं पर नाश केवल आकार का ही होता है। जब प्रलय हो जाता है तो यह सृष्टि परमात्मा परम शिव में लीन हो जाती है द्रव्य बनते हैं फिर स्वरूप पाते हैं।

ललद्यद ने भी इस संदर्भ में कहा हैः–

ॲसी ऑस्य तय ॲसी आसव।

असी दौर कॅर्य पत् वथ।।
मनुष्य लूस नु ज़्यवान तु मरान।
रवस लूस नु अत् गथ।।

आत्मा अनन्त गुणी तथा शक्तिमान है। वही आत्मा आकाशवासी सूर्य, अन्तरिक्ष वासी वायु वेदि वासी अग्नि और कलश वासी सोम रस है वही मनुष्य, देवता, यज्ञ और आकाश में है। वही जल में, पृथ्वी पर और पर्वत पर उत्पन्न होता है।

वही सत्य है वह महान है। जिस प्रकार एक ही अग्नि जगत में प्रविष्ट हो कर बाह्य वस्तु के रूप भेद से भिन्न–भिन्न रूप धारण करती है उसी प्रकार सब भूतों की वह एक अन्तर–आत्मा नाना प्रकार की वस्तुओं के भेद से उस–उस वस्तु का रूप धारण किये हुए है, तथा वही सब के बाहर भी है। जिस प्रकार एक ही वायु जगत में प्रविष्ट होकर नाना वस्तुओं के भेद से तद्रूप हो गई है उसी प्रकार सब भूतों की वहीं एक अन्तरात्मा नाना प्रकार की वस्तुओं के भेद से उस–उस रूप की हो गई है और उन के बाहर भी है जो अनित्य वस्तुओं में नित्य है जो चेतनावालों में चेतन है, जो अकेले ही अनेकों की काम्य वस्तुओं का विधान करता है, उसका जो ज्ञानी लोग अपने अन्दर दर्शन करते है। उन्हीं को नित्य शान्ति मिलती है।

वहां सूर्य प्रकाश नहीं देता, चन्द्रमा अथवा – तारे आदि नहीं चमकते, ये बिजलियाँ भी नहीं चमकतीं फिर अग्नि की क्या बात है? सभी वस्तुएं उस प्रकाश मान से ही प्रकाशित होती हैं क्योंकि वास्तव में वहीं असली प्रकाश स्रोत है उसी की दीप्ति से सब दीप्त होते हैं अश्वथ वृक्ष एक मूल से उद्भूत होता है। और काफ़ी दूर तक फैल जाता है ऊपर की ओर जिसका मूल और नीचे की ओर जिसकी शाखाएं फैली हुई हैं। ऐसा यह अश्वथ वृक्ष (संसार–वृक्ष) है। वहीं उज्ज्वल हैं वही ब्रह्म है उसी को अमृत कहते हैं। समस्त संसार उस में आश्रित है कोई उसका अतिक्रमण नहीं कर सकता। यही वह आत्मा है।

जगत के किसी भी पदार्थका नाश नहीं होता। नूतन कुछ भी नहीं है और होगा भी नहीं। अभिव्यक्त की एक ही शृंखलाचक्र की भान्ति बारम्बार उपस्थिति होती रहती है। जगत में जितनी गति है, वह समस्त तरंग के आकार में एक बार उठती है और फिर गिरती है। विविध ब्रह्माण्ड सूक्ष्म रूपों में प्रसूत होते रहते हैं। स्थूल रूप धारण करते हैं। फिर लीन हो कर सूक्ष्म भाव में जाते हैं। वे फिर से इस सूक्ष्म भाव से स्थूल भाव में आते हैं। कुछ समय तक उसी अवस्था में रहते हैं और पुनः धीरे–धीरे उस कारण में चले जाते हैं। ऐसा ही जीवन के सम्बन्ध में सत्य है जीवन की प्रत्येक अभि व्यक्ति आती है और फिर चली जाती है तो फिर नष्ट क्या होता है? केवल रूप–आकृति। वह रूप नष्ट हो जाता है। किन्तु फिर आता है। एक अर्थ में तो सभी शरीर तथा सभी रूप नित्य है। किसी भी शक्ति का नाश नहीं होता। उनके आगे और पीछे परिणाम होते रहते हैं। और अन्ततः जहाँ से उनकी उत्पत्ति हुई थी, वहीं वे लौट जाते हैं। वास्तव में न जा रहे है न आ रहे हैं। अत्मा अनन्त है, सर्वव्यापी है; नित्य; मुक्त, अज और अविनाशी।

जैसे मनुष्य पुराने कपड़ों को छोड़कर दूसरे नए कपड़े धारण करता है वैसे ही यह आत्मा पुराने शरीर को छोड़कर दूसरे नए शरीरों को धारण करता है; पुराना शरीर छोड़ने को मरना कह देते हैं और नया शरीर धारण करने को जन्मना कहते हैं। जब तक प्रकृति के साथ सम्बन्ध रहता है तब तक यह आत्मा पुराने शरीरों को छोड़ कर कर्मों के अनुसार या अन्तकालीन चिन्तन के अनुसार नये–नये शरीरों को प्राप्त होता रहता है।

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथ शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा–न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही।।22।।

(क०) यिथ् कॅन्य जन प्रॉन्य वस्त्र छि त्रावान,
नॅव्य नॅव्य जाम् बॆयि गंडान तु छावान।
तिथय कॅन्य छि प्रावान नवि कायाये,
ऊँ नमो भगवते वासु देवाये।।

यह आत्मा किसी काल में भी न तो जन्मती है और न मरती है तथा न यह उत्पन्न होकर फिर होने वाली ही है क्योंकि यह अजन्मा, नित्य, सनातन और पुरातन है। शरीर के मारे जाने पर भी यह नहीं मारा जाता। जो इस आत्मा को मारने वाला समझता है तथा जो इसको मरा मानता है वे दोनों ही नहीं जानते कि यह आत्मा वास्तव में न तो किसी को मारता है और न किसी के द्वारा मारा जाता है। अनन्त एकरूप सत्स्वरूप और आकाश से भी अत्यन्त सूक्ष्म, प्रभाव शाली, परम शुद्ध आत्मा का किस से किस तरह क्या नष्ट होता है? अर्थात उसका किसी प्रकार, कभी विनाश नहीं होता। अतैव ज्ञानस्वरूप अर्जुन तुम आदि और मध्य से रहित, अनन्त एवं अव्यक्त, अपने वास्तविक स्वरूप का अवलोकन करो। तुम अप्रमेय, दोष रहित, चैतन्यस्वरूप, अज, नित्य और विशुद्ध हो। तुम स्वयं जरा–मरन से रहित, नित्य, चिन्मय, आत्म–स्वरूप हो (योग वशिष्ठ)

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ।।33।।

(क०) नय छेंनि आत्मा कुन हथियारय,
ॲंदरिनु ज़लु सुत्य् नय दज़ि नारय।
नॉशी छि मायायि हुंज़ कायाये,
ऊँ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय।।

इस आत्मा को कोई शस्त्र काट नहीं सकता, क्योंकि यह प्रकृति शस्त्र वहां तक पहुंच ही नहीं सकते, अग्नि इस आत्मा को जला नहीं सकती क्योंकि यह अग्नि वहां तक पहुंच ही नहीं सकती। जल इस को गीला कर नहीं सकता, क्योंकि जल की वहां तक पहुंच नहीं हो सकती। वायु इसे सुखा नहीं सकती, क्योंकि वायु भी वहां तक पहुंच नहीं सकती।

पृथ्वी, जल, तेज और वायु – ये चारों तत्व आकाश से उत्पन्न होते हैं। पर वे अपने कारणभूत आकाश में भी किसी तरह का विकार पैदा नहीं कर सकते, अर्थात पृथ्वी, आकाश का छेदन नहीं कर सकती। जल गीला नहीं

कर सकता, अग्नि जला नहीं सकती वायु सुखा नहीं सकती। जब ये चारों तत्व अपने कारण–भूत आकाश को, आकाश के कारणभूत महत्तत्व को और महत्तत्व के कारणभूत प्रकृति को भी कोई क्षति नहीं पहुंचा सकते। तब प्रकृति से सर्वथा अतीत आत्मा तक यह पहुंच ही कैसे सकती है? इन गुण युक्त पदार्थों की उस निर्गुण तत्व में पहुचं ही कैसे हो सकती (श्रीमद्भगीता) अतः गीता, ग्रन्थ, वेद, इस बात की पुष्टि करते हैं कि आत्मा अजर, अमर, अमृत, निर्गुण, निर्विकार है। साक्षात परमात्मा है। आत्मा अमर है। यह मरती नहीं है।

"अमर छा मरान"

क्या अमर मरता है?

– पी.एन.कौल "सायिल"

यह वह सत्य है जिसको नकारना असम्भव है। जब कोई अमर हो जाये तो उसके मरने का प्रश्न ही निर्रथक है। "अमर छा मरान" इस कथन के हिन्दी में दो पहलू हो सकते हैं। एक प्रश्नात्मक रूप – क्या अमर मरता है? दूसरा यह कि अमर कभी मरता नहीं। दोनों पहलू अन्त में एक ही निर्णय पर पहुंच जाते हैं। बात वास्तव में यह है कि इस कथ्य तथा गम्भीर विचार की ओर हमारा ध्यान खींचने वाले हमारे जगत गुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी के मुखार्विन्द से निकला हुआ – "अमर छा मरान"–सभी पाठकों, विद्वानों, भक्तों, साधकों, लेखकों के लिए सोचने, विचारने का अवसर प्रदान करता है। और यह हम सब के लिए अध्ययन तथा विमर्श का संदेश सिद्ध होगा। यही होती है बड़ी बात जो बड़ों के ही एक मात्र संकेत से समझने, इससे सम्बन्धित ज्ञान प्राप्त करने की तीव्र इच्छा को जन्म देती है। परिणाम–स्वरूप एक आवश्यकता सामने आकर हमें बाध्य करती है कि ऐसे विचारों पर विचार करिये। तो यह स्वाभाविक है कि पठन–पाठन तथा लेखन–क्रिया के साथ जुड़े लोग नाना प्रकार के धर्मों को टटोलने तथा इन्हें पढ़ने में रुचि लें। दिलचस्पी लें। जब तब इस विचार पर इस प्रकार संजीदगी से सोचने और इस पर लेखनी उठाने की नौबत नहीं आई थी। परन्तु यह अब हमारे गुरु महाराज की इच्छा है कि हम सब इस रहस्य पर पूरा–पूरा ध्यान दें। मुझे पूर्ण आशा है ऐसा ही होगा। जो कभी इस बात की ओर मन नहीं लगाते। अब पूरी लगन से, तन्मयता से इसके प्रत्येक पहलू को यथा सम्भव परख लेंगे। यह वह जीवन रहस्य है जिसको आनन्दकंद श्री कृष्ण भगवान ने अर्जुन को समझाया था, जिसे श्रीमद्भगवत गीता कहा जाता है, जो स्वयं भगवान से गाई गई है। इस गीताजी को भगवान गोपीनाथजी महाराज बड़े आदर के साथ अपने पास रखा करते थे। जिस

पर बहुधा कहा गया है कि भगवान जीगीता जी को ही अपना गुरु मानते थे। निःसंदेह हम सब के लिए भगवद्गगीता जी जीवन आदर्श है जो कर्म पर ही बल देती है। कर्मों के अनुसार ही जन्म होता है। देखना यह है कि मनुष्य अनश्वर है अथवा नश्वर। जहां तक अमर के अर्थों का सम्बन्ध है, ''अमर'' का अर्थ है नित्य, अनश्वर, देवता या शाश्वत। इसी प्रकार 'मरण' का अर्थ मौत, समाप्ति, मृत्यु या विनष्ट होना। इसके मुताबिक जगत्गुरु का कथन यह स्पष्ट करता है कि इस विश्व में मनुष्य के देह के साथ–साथ प्रत्येक वस्तु नष्ट होती है। अतः नश्वर है। इसके लिए भगवत्–गीता में आत्मा के अनश्वर होने का यह श्लोक हमारे लिए भावपूर्ण है :–

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि,
नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो
न शोषयति मारुतः।।

प्रो० दिल मुहमद इस श्लोक का उर्दू अनुवाद इस प्रकार करते हैः–

कटेगी न तलवार से आत्मा
जलेगी कहां नार से आत्मा।
न गीली हो पानी लगाने से यह
न सूखे हवा में सुखाने से यह।।

इसी से सम्बन्धित यह भी सत्य है कि – जो भी जन्म पाता है वह अवश्य नष्ट होता है। अब यह प्रश्न उठता है आखिर जन्मता कौन नहीं?

गीता जी के अनुसार आत्मा कभी मरती नहीं। मरती है काया जो जीवन रहित होती है। इसके पंच–भूत अपने अपने मूल भूतों के साथ मिल जाते हैं। और आत्मा अमर है वह किसी दूसरे वेश में आ जाती है। जिसके लिए भी गीता जी में भगवान कृष्ण अर्जुन से उसका भ्रम दूर करने हेतु कहते हैंः–

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय,
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीवर्णा
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही।।

जैसे मनुष्य फटे पुराने वस्त्रों को उतार कर नए वस्त्र धारण करता है वैसे ही आत्मा भी नए वेश में आ जाती है, नया चोला पहनती है। ऐसे ही ललेश्वरी भी अपने वाखों (वाक्यों) में बार–बार कहती हैं:–

कुसू मरि तय कसू मारन
मरि कुस तय मारन कस
युस हरु हरु त्रॉविथ गरु गरु करे
अदु सुय मरि तय मारन तस

स्पष्ट है, कौन मरने वाला है तथा किसे मारेंगे। कौन मरेगा तथा मारेंगे किसको। हां जो भगवद्नाम तथा भगवान पर विश्वास खो कर स्वार्थ में डूबा रहे मरना तो उसी को है।

ऐसे अन्य अन्य विचार तो आत्मा के अमर होने का प्रमाण पेश करते हैं। पर एक विशेष प्रश्न अब यह पैदा होता है कि जब यह समस्त संसार नश्वर है इसमें सारी चीज़ें नष्ट हो जाती हैं। तो शेष कौन सी चीज़ें हैं जो नष्ट नहीं होती तथा जो कभी भी मरती नहीं हैं – ? इस प्रश्न के उत्तरार्थ मेरे विचार में ऐसे सद्कर्म तथा ऐसी सुकृतियां सदा सर्वदा ही जीवित रहीं हैं जो मानव धर्म, हरिस्मरण तथा सच्ची भक्ति की भूमिका निभाती हैं। जैसे पितृभक्ति में श्रवण कुमार की सुकृति अमर है। रामचन्द्र जी महाराज की पितृभक्ति। भरत जी का अधिकार का सद्उपयोग। हनुमान जी महाराज की रामभक्ति। सीता माता का पतिव्रता धर्म। भगत ध्रुव का भगवान् पर सुदृढ़ विश्वास। ललेश्वरी तथा माता रूपा भवानी के चमत्कार। जगत् गुरु भगवान गोपी नाथ के सिद्ध पुरुष होने के नाना प्रकार के चमत्कारपूर्ण प्रमाण आधुनिक युग में जुबां–जुबां पर मौजूद हैं। ये सब कृत्य निःसन्देह

अमर हैं। जिनको इस संसार में जीवित ही मान लिया जाता है जो नई पीढ़ियों का पथ प्रर्दशन करती रहती हैं।

प्रकृति के प्रत्येक पदार्थ में जो अपने गुण तथा विशेषताएं होती हैं वही गुण यहां के लोगों में भी मौजूद हैं, हम में भी। हां, यर्थाथ यह है गुण गुणों के साथ मिलजाते हैं। अगर बदलते हैं तो वह हैं इनके रूप तथा आकार। कवि ने इस विषय में इस प्रकार अपने भाव प्रकट किये हैं:—

मॆचुय ख्वनि तय ख्वन मॆचि़ हुंज़ुय
हुति ति मॆचुय तु यॆति ति छॆ मॆचुय
मॆचि़य छॆ लागनय पनुनि मॆचि़ हुंज़ुय
मॆचि़ मंज़ श्रेपिथ लॊबमख मॆ चुय

— 'सायिल'

अमर हय तु मरुन क्याह
अनश्वरस तु नष्टुन क्याह
यि छु व्यचा़रुन छुनय छु क्याह
यि पलि पावुन छ सॅन्य् कथाह

— 'सायिल'

भगवान गोपीनाथ जी का जीवन–दर्पण अमर दर्शन – अमर छा मरान

– डॉ (प्रो०) जिया लाल हण्डू

भगवान गोपीनाथ जी का अमर नाम आज के सन्त–महात्माओं की अग्रिम पंक्ति में लिखा जाता है। बीसवीं शताब्दी के इसके कई अन्य समसामयिक थे, नन्दबब तथा कशकाक जैसे प्रकाण्ड साधु–सन्त अद्भुत गौरव–गरिमा के शिरोमणि। इनमें से मणि ग्राम के कशि काक तथा अन्य कई सन्त उन्हें एक पारखी सिद्ध मानते थे। वस्तुतः भगवान गोपीनाथ जी शैवमत के धर्मावलम्बी थे। एक वरिष्ठ साधक होने के कारण वे उच्च कोटि के सिद्ध थे जो नवधा भक्ति के तत्त्वों के परिपूर्ण ज्ञाता थे। भक्ति–रस की मीठी रोटी का आस्वादन करने वाले भगवान गोपीनाथ जी सदा उस परमात्मा की साधना में लीन रहने वाले योगी थे। वे सदाशिव, नित्य, सत्य तथा अनादि ईश्वर का ही स्मरण किया करते थे। वस्तुतः वे शैवमत के ही पुजारी होकर उसके साधक थे। वे उस समय कश्मीर में भक्ति के क्षेत्र में सभी निगुर्ण, सगुण, सूफी एवं कर्तृक भक्त अनेकता में एकता के सूत्र का ही संगुफन करने में लीन थे। भक्तिरस का आध्यात्मिक प्राधान्य था और अनुराग एवं रसात्मकता की धारा ही प्रवाहित हो रही थी।

भगवान गोपीनाथ जी कश्मीर के वासी थे और एक उच्च शैवकर्मी। वे शैवदर्शन के सिद्धान्तों से अत्यंत प्रभावित थे जिसकी दो धाराएँ यहाँ प्रचलित थीं – पहली स्पन्द एवं द्वितीय प्रत्यभिज्ञान। दोनों धाराएँ एक ही तत्त्ववाद को लेकर अग्रसर हो रही थी। दोनों में थोड़ा–सा अन्तर यह है कि स्पंदन में ईश्वर–द्वय की अनुभूति का मार्ग ईश्वर–दर्शन एवं उसके द्वारा मल निवारण है जब कि प्रत्यभिज्ञान में वह मार्ग ईश्वर के रूप में अपना ही प्रत्यभिज्ञान है अर्थात् स्वयं ही इस प्रकार का ज्ञान होना कि मैं ही शिव हूँ जिसे हम 'शिवोऽहम्' कह सकते हैं। इसमें कहा गया है कि शिव, आत्मा एवं प्रकृति सभी नित्य है जब कि अद्वैत में प्रकृति को माया कहा गया है।

भगवान गोपीनाथ जी को प्रत्यभिज्ञान का ही श्रेय प्राप्त था। उनकी दृष्टि में शिव ही सत्य, सनातन तथा अमर है जिसका ज्ञान 'रुद्र मंत्र' से प्राप्त होता है। यही शिव त्रिगुणातीत, अशरीरी तथा सनातन है। वही अंशी है जिसका अंश यह आत्मा है। मानव इसी शिव का सायुज्य रूप है जिसकी आत्मा शिव से मिलकर सायुज्य रूप धारण करती है।

आज के वैज्ञानिक एवं तकनीकी युग में यह अमर अंशी सत्य मरा नहीं है अपितु अमर है। इसी का सत्य एवं सनातन स्वरूप युगादि से इस जगत को चलायमान करके गति देता है तथा यह प्रकृति भी इसे अभिव्यक्ति देकर सनातन एवं शाश्वत रूप का आभास कराती है। इसी प्रकार एक बार भगवान गोपीनाथ जी से पूछा गया 'आपके गुरु कौन हैं' तुरन्त उन्होंने उत्तर दिया था "गीता के सात–सौ श्लोको में से कोई एक श्लोक मेरा गुरु हो सकता है"। इसके अतिरिक्त उन्होंने तंत्रों का भी अध्ययन किया था। एक तो वे सदा धूनी जलाकर रखते थे एवं दूसरा वे चिलम पीकर संतुष्ट रहते थे। गीता की मान्यता के कारण वे कहा करते थे कि मानव के लिए शुभ कर्म करना एवं उसकी सेवा करना फलदायक होता है। उनका मानना था कि कर्म कई प्रकार के होते हैं – सुकर्म, कुकर्म–विकर्म तथा अकर्म। सुकर्मों से ही मानव का उद्धार होता है, कुकर्म मानव के लिए हानिकारक एवं अकर्म अर्थात् कर्मों से भागकर आलसी बनकर रहना भी हानिकारक है। वे मोक्ष–प्राप्ति में विश्वास रखते थे ताकि मानव "सालोक्यंम्" प्राप्त करके सदा वैकुण्ठ में ही निवास करके नित्य ईश्वर के सामीप्य में रहे। मानव को चाहिए कि वह अपने–आपको यह मानकर अपने जीवन–दर्शन को प्राप्त करके ध्येय को प्राप्त करे।

उनकी यह धारणा थी कि परमात्मा (अंशी) अशरीरी है, त्रिगुणतीत है और मानव उसी का एक अंश होने के कारण त्रिगुणात्मक रूप है। इस अंश (आत्मा) का शरीर के साथ नाश नहीं होता। केवल शरीर ही का दहन होता है जैसे "देहं दहम्" अर्थात् यह शरीर मरता है और जलने के लिए ही बना

है। इस आत्मा को न शस्त्र काट सकते हैं और न आग जला सकती है, न पानी भिगो सकता है और न ही हवा सुखा सकती है। यह भी सदा नित्य रहती है। इसलिए जीव कभी नहीं मरता। इस आत्मा की नित्यता के विषय में श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता में कहा गया है।

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्त मध्यानि भारत।

अव्यक्त निधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना।

अर्थात् हे अर्जुन! यह आत्मा जन्म से पूर्व अशरीरी था और जब इसने जन्म लिया तो यह शरीरधारी बन गया। जब मानव ने यह शरीर त्याग दिया तब वह पुनः अशरीरी बन गया। इससे यह बात स्पष्ट हो जाती है कि मानव को जन्म से पहले कोई शरीर नहीं था, जब वह जगत् में आया उसे शरीर मिल गया। जब मर गया, तब उसके बाद पुनः अशरीरी बन गया। इस प्रकार शरीर सदा नाशवान है किन्तु यह आत्मा अमर है।

वस्तुतः यह बात सत्य है कि अमर कभी मरता नहीं है, यह केवल शरीर ही है जो मर जाता है। मानव को अमर बनने के लिए सत्कार्य करना पड़ता है। कर्म–भूमि पर जन्म लेकर योग–साधना करनी पड़ती है। भक्ति एवं ज्ञान के साथ ईश्वर की शरण में जाना पड़ता है। ऐसा करने पर ही मानव अपने पूर्व रूप को पाकर जन्म–मरण के नाश से छूट कर एवं मुक्ति के दायरे में आकर यह सालोक्यम् को प्राप्त करता है।

अंग्रेज़ी कवि वर्डसर्थ ने कहा है –

"Our birth is a sleep and forgetting

The Soul that rises with us, our life's star hath had elsewhere its setting.

Shades of the prison house begin to close, upon the growing boy."

अर्थात् यहाँ कहा गया है कि हमारी आत्मा (अंश) कही बाहर से आकर जब यहाँ इस जगत में जन्म लेती है यह दूसरे लोक में अपनी आंखें बंद

करके यहाँ जन्म लेकर नेत्र खोलती है। इसका वहाँ अस्त होता है और यहाँ उदय होता है। यहीं आत्मा हमारे जीवन का एक चमकता तारक होता है। इस धरती पर ज्यो–ज्यों शरीर पाकर मानव बढ़ता चला जाता है त्यो–त्यों यहाँ की बन्धनमयी छाया इस पर पड़कर उसे उस परमात्मा की शक्तिमयी आभा से दूर हटाते हुए ले जाती है। इसका तात्पर्य यह है कि परमात्मा की नित्यता से जीव हटकर पुनः जलनशील बन जाता है किन्तु अंशी अपना नित्य रूप न त्यागकर सदा अमर बनकर ही रह जाता है उसका अंश (आत्मा) भी अमर बनता है।

श्रीनगर (कश्मीर) के एक पंडित परिवार में ही भगवान् गोपीनाथ जी का जन्म जुलाई 3, 1898 को हुआ था। अपने बाल्यकाल में ही उन्होंने अपने माता–पिता से अध्यात्म की शिक्षा प्राप्त की। उनसे ही जो कुछ उन्हें मिला, वही उनके जीवन की कहानी बन गई। वे केवल आठवीं तक ही पढ़ पाए किन्तु सत्संग के कारण उन्होंने बहुत–कुछ पाया और भोगा, भवानी–सहस्रनाम, गीता एवं शैव शास्त्र का ज्ञान सत्संग द्वारा प्राप्त किया। अपने बाल्यकाल में ही वे अपने माता–पिता के प्यार से वंचित रह गए। परा विद्या के ज्ञान के कारण वे एक सिद्ध योगी बन गए और यही कारण है कि उन्होंने प्रसिद्धि पाई। कुछ अनहोनी घटनाओं के कारण वे जीवन की सुविधाओं से वंचित हो गए और ज्ञान के कारण दुनिया से विरक्त भी हुए और सिद्ध भी बने। इनकी दो बहनें और दो भाई थे। इन्हें बहनों का वैधव्य सहन करना पड़ा और भाई निःसन्तान रहे। इस सांसारिक पीड़ा के कारण वे विरक्त से होने लगे किन्तु ज्ञान–प्राप्ति की तलाश में इधर–उधर भटकते रहे। उनका जन्म माँ शारिका के आशीर्वाद से हुआ था और वे शारिका–पर्वत की प्रदक्षिणा सदा करते रहे। शारिका–देवी के आशीर्वाद से वे अपना जीवन–निर्वाह करते रहे। कुछ समय तक वे विश्व नाथ प्रेस, फतेह कदल, श्रीनगर के भी कर्मचारी रहे। यहाँ इनका मन नहीं लगा। चिंता से मुक्त होकर अपने चिन्तन में लगकर इस दुराशा से हटकर भगवद्भजन में लग गए। वे जान गए कि केवल ईश्वर अमर है और क्या हम

उनकी सन्तान होकर ऐसी पदवी पा नहीं सकते? वे अपनी तपस्या में लगकर अन्त में मई 28, 1968 में अमाधिस्थ हो गए। आशा है कि उनकी जीवन–तपस्या एवं उनका जीवन–दर्पण सर्वहितकारी बनकर समस्त कल्याण का एक अमर–दर्शन प्रमाणित होगा।

अमर मरता है क्या

मूल कश्मीरी लेख मोती लाल कौल 'नाज़'

– अनुवाद प्रो० पी० एन० त्रिछ़ल

जन्म से जीवन और जीवन से मरण का नित्य सम्बन्ध है। जिसने जन्म लिया उसे अपने पूर्व–कर्मों का फल–भोग करना है, उस मार्ग पर गमन करना है जो उसकी भाग्यरेखा में लिखा गया है, वह भार वहन करना है जिसके लिए उसने जन्म धारण किया है। जगत के नानाविध रूपों से अवगत होना अत्यन्त कठिन है; वे रूप भ्रमित करने वाले हैं और झकझोरने वाले हैं; मोहक भी हैं और मीठे भी, या यों कहिए कि भोगने में कठोर और छलावा देने वाले भी। पग–पग पर माया जाल बिछा हुआ है पथ घुमावदार जो जीवको दिक् भ्रमित और पतन की ओर धेकल देते हैं। सम और सरल दिखने वाले मार्ग वास्तव में भटकाऊ और उलझे हुए हैं कि उन भटकनों से बचना और उलझनों से निस्तार पाना आकाश–सुमन तोड़ना जैसा है। जीवनयापन के सभी मार्गों का अवसान कभी–न–कभी मृत्यु रूपी सीमाक्षेत्र में अवश्यम्भावी है, क्योंकि जीवन की पूँजी से मृत्यु के प्रासाद का निर्माण होता है। Michel de montaine ने कहा है:– "The continuous labour of your life is to build the house of death." ऐसी अभिव्यक्ति गुरुनानक ने भी की है – 'नानक दुखिया सब संसार।'। कितने ही संसार में आए और खाली हाथ गए। कितनों ने नमरूद के दम भरे, कितनों को बाहु–बल का अभिमान था और अन्त में मिट्टी में मिलें। संसार रूपी ग्रन्थ के पृष्ट उलटते–उलटते वय निकल जाती है फिर भी एक शब्द तक सीख नहीं पाता। इस जग में आया तो क्यों आया, इस जग से गया तो क्यों? किसी कवि ने कहा हैं: ''आकर जाता क्यों, मरता क्यों पैदा होकर, इस आवन–जावन पर, है क्या मानव को अधिकार?''

मनुष्य जन्म–मरण के चक्र में तब तक घिरा है, जब तक उसे मोक्ष न मिले। मोक्ष प्राप्त करना मूढ़ों की विचारपरिधि से बाहर है; विचार करने के

लिए अपने आप को पहचानने की आवश्यकता है, अपनी पहचान करने के लिए अन्तर्मुखी होकर (आत्म तत्त्व) निहारने की योग्यता होनी चाहिए। यह कहना तो सरल है, करने को कठिन। ललद्यद को कहना पड़ाः–

ग्वरन दॊपनम कुनय वचुन
न्यॆबर् दॊपनम अन्दर अचुन
सुय मे ललि गव वाख तु वचुन
तवय ह्यॊत मे नंगय नचुन

इसके लिए गुरु की आवश्यकता पड़ती है। गुरु–उपदेश का मनन करके अनुसरण करना अन्तस् की ज्वाला से दग्ध होना है; जो इस दाह से उभरेगा वह मोक्षलाभ कर के जन्म–मरण चक्र से छूट पाएगा। उसके लिए दैहिक दीर्घायु वा अल्पायु निर्थक सिद्ध होते हैं। आदि शंकराचार्य अत्याल्पायु अर्थात् चालीस* वर्ष से भी पहले इस संसार से विदा हो गए; पर धर्मप्रचार के प्रशंसनीय कार्य कर गए जिनके कारण वे अमर हो गए। स्वामी विवेकानन्द उनचास# वर्ष की आयु में ही भगवान् के प्यारे हो गए परन्तु अपने श्लाघ्य कर्म और भगवद् कृपा से (सदा) अमर रहेंगे; ऐसे महापुरुष संसार में आकर ऐसा दिव्य प्रकाश बिखेरते हैं जिससे संसार का तमस और अधर्म छिटक जाता है। ऐसे ही सैंकड़ों उदाहरण हैं जिनसे हमारी भँवर में फँसी जीवनरूपी नाव तर पाएगी।

शरीर तब तक है जब तक इसमें प्राण हैं। शरीर में आत्मा का वास है; आत्मा शरीर में तभी तक परिव्याप्त है जब तक इसमें प्राण हैं। देह पाँच तत्त्वों का मिश्रण (?) है; जब तक इन तत्वों का अनुपात स्थिर रहेगा तब तक देहरूपी नैया तिरती रहेगी। 'चकबस्त' ज़िन्दगी और मौत की व्याख्या अपने एक शेर में इस प्रकार करते हैंः–

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* वे बत्तीस (32) वर्ष तक जिए

*– स्वामी विवेकानन्द उनतालीस (39) वर्ष की आयु में अन्तर्धान हो गए।

– प्रो० त्रिछ़ल

ज़िन्दगी क्या है अनासिर का ज़हूरे तरतीब;
मौत क्या है इन्ही अनासिर का बिखर जाना।

इस का सार यही है कि देह नश्वर है, यह अनित्य और क्षणिक है; इसमें बसी आत्मा अमर है, किसी भी कारण से इसका नाश नहीं होता। भगवान् कृष्ण गीता में अर्जुन को सुनाते हैं कि आत्मा अमर है यह न अग्नि से जल सकती है, न जल से गीली हो सकती है; कोई शस्त्र इसे काट नहीं सकता। भगवान् गोपीनाथ जी की गूढ़ार्थ और सारगर्भित उक्ति है 'अमर छा मरान' अमर मरता है क्या? इसका यही अर्थ है कि जो अमर है, वह मरणप्राय नहीं है। मोटे रूप से विचार करने पर यह आभास हो जाता है कि इसका बहुत गूढ़ अर्थ है, इसका विमर्श करने के लिए व्युत्पन्न बुद्धि की आवश्यकता है। ज्ञातव्य है कि अरण्य में मृग मारा–मारा फिरता है मृगमद की खोज में, उसको इस का भाण नहीं कि कस्तूरी उसकी अपनी नाभि से सुगन्ध बिखेर रही है। उसकी पूरी ज़िन्दगी उसे ढूंढने में निकल जाती है। यही सत्य मनुष्य में भी विद्यमान हैं; उसे बाहर खोजने की आवश्यकता ही नहीं; सब उसके अन्तस् में है; इसको पहचानने और इसका मनन करने की आवश्यकता है, इस रहस्य का उद्घाटन कराने वाले पथ–प्रदर्शक की, गुरु की, नितान्त अनिवार्यता है। ज्ञानामृत पान करने से अमरत्व लाभ करना सम्भव होता है। यदि हममें ज्ञानामृत पान करने की पात्रता होगी, और भगवान् गोपीनाथजी की कृपा–दृष्टि होगी, तो जगद्गुरु भगवान् गोपीनाथजी इस अमृत का पान कराके हमें कृतार्थ करेंगे। यह सब प्राप्त करना सरल नहीं है। इसे प्राप्त करने के लिए मनुष्य को यातनाएँ झेलनी पड़ती हैं, प्रचंड जलती दुपहरी का ताप सहना पड़ता है, घनघोर बादल फटने और उल्कापात की प्रचण्डता से स्वयं को अभ्यस्त करना पड़ता है; यह क्षमता/पात्रता पाने के लिए 'क्रिया' का अर्जन करना पड़ता है, इसके लिए सहन–शक्ति चाहिए, प्रलोभनों से दूर हट कर, प्रेम और अनुराग रूपी महोदधि में डूबना पड़ता है तभी अमर होने का अमृत प्राप्त करके यह आप्त

वाक्य चरिचार्थ होगा कि 'अमर मरता है, क्या'। अपनी स्वयं अभ्यर्थना करना व्यर्थ है, शरीर को ढाँपने के लिए पशमीना–भंडारण करना, दीमकों को अह्वान करना है।

भगवान् गोपीनाथजी के अमूल्य वचनों पर चलकर यदि हम अहंकार का नाश करने में सफल होंगे, सम्भव है कि श्रेष्ठता तथा बड़प्पन का एकाध सोपान भी चढ़ें तो चढ़ें।

जब अपना–पराया की विचारना मन से निकालने में सफल होंगे; जब सम्पन्नता और आभिजात्य का अभिमान और गर्व का त्याग करेंगे, जब शीत और उष्ण को सम मानें, जब सरलता, सत्य, निष्कपटता का आचरण संसार में उपजावें और बरतेंगे, तब जीवन का लक्ष्य प्राप्त करना कठिन नहीं होगा; तब न यम ही सफल होगा और न रहेगा मृत्यु का भय। जीवनपथ समतल होगा, जीवन सहज और शीतल हो जाएगा, भय समाप्त होकर भवसागर से निस्तार मिलेगा। गुणों की पूजा करने से, ईश्वर का प्रणिपात करने से, और संस्कारों का पोषण करने से न केवल मृत्यु–भय नहीं रहेगा, अमर बनने के मार्ग प्रशस्त और प्रज्वलित होंगे।

बाह्य संसार से आलिप्त होता है बाह्य शरीर, और आभ्यन्तर संसार का संबंध है अन्तःकरणों से। बाह्य व्यवहार हमें इतना व्यस्त रखता है कि आन्तरिक संसार का ध्यान ही नहीं होता। हम अधपके और बीच रास्ते में ही रह जाते हैं; जिस (अमर पद) को प्राप्त करने के लिए जन्म लिया होता है उसको पाने के बिना और समझने के बग़ैर, आवागमन के चक्र में जन्म–जन्मान्तरों के लिए फँस जाते हैं।

इसी पर कवि ने कहा हैः–

वुगु–वॉनिस मु लार
ॲन्दुऱ् वुज़नस प्रार।

अमर छा मरान
अमर मरता है क्या?

– प्रो० पी.एन. मधुप

देह त्याग करने से लगभग एक डेढ़ महीना पहले जगद्गुरु भगवान श्री गोपीनाथ जी महाराज के एक भक्त उनकी शारीरिक दशा देख कर अत्यन्त दुखी हुए। उसके मनको यह विचार सालता रहा कि कहीं भगवान जी अपने भौतिक शरीर को त्याग न दें। अन्तर्यामी भगवान जी भक्त की चिन्ता जान गये और भक्त की ओर सम्बोधित हो कर बोले :–

'अमर छा मरान' याने क्या अमर मरता है?[1]

प्रस्तुत आलेख में हम भगवान जी के इस कथन को समझने का प्रयत्न करेंगे। पहले हम 'अमर' तथा 'मरण' शब्दों का आशय समझने की कोशिश करेगें। 'अमर' शब्द के अर्थ हैं – देवता, अनश्वर, नित्य, शाश्वत इत्यादि। 'मरण' शब्द का अर्थ है – मृत्यु, मौत, नष्ट, समाप्त इत्यादि। इन्हीं अर्थों के सन्दर्भ में हम भगवान ही के कथन की पड़ताल करने की कोशिश करेगें। भगवान जी के कथन का सीधा सरल तात्पर्य हैं – जो अनश्वर या नित्य है, वह विनष्ट या समाप्त नहीं होता। अब प्रश्न उठता है कि अनश्वर या शाश्वत कौन है? वैसे विश्व में हर वस्तु, जिनमें मनुष्य देह भी है, नष्ट होती है। भगवान श्रीकृष्ण कहते हैं – जातस्यहि ध्रुवोमृत्युः जन्मता है उसका नष्ट होना निश्चित है। फिर विनष्ट कौन नहीं होता? जो जन्मता नहीं वह मरता नहीं। जन्मता कौन नहीं? इस प्रश्न का सीधा उत्तर है आत्मा मरती या नष्ट नहीं होती यह शाश्वत अर्थात् 'अमर' है। अमर के बारे में चिन्ता करना फ़जूल है। 'अमर करता है क्या?' कथन से जगद्गुरु भगवान जी भक्त के ज़ेहन में यह सच्चाई भरना चाहते हैं कि जिसकी चिन्ता नहीं करनी चाहिए उसकी चिन्ता क्यों करते हो? यह व्यर्थ की बातें हैं। ऐसी बातों की चिन्ता करना व्यर्थ हैं। इस सन्दर्भ में मुझे डॉ० 'कुसुम जी' के एक गीत की निम्न पंक्तियाँ याद आती हैं :–

कोई जग में है कब मरता,
केवल अपने वस्त्र बदलता,
जीवन–मरन मार्ग परिवर्तन–
शाश्वत रहती यहाँ अमरता
जीर्ण पुरातन वस्त्र फेंक कर
नूतन वस्त्र धरा करते हो।
तुम्हें शस्त्र क्या छेद सकेगा,
पावक भी क्या जला सकेगा,
पानी से क्या गल पाओगे,
मारुत भी क्या सुखा सकेगा।
जब तुम मरते नहीं कभी भी, यह कैसा भय तुम्हें अभी है,
निभर्य हो कर कर्म करो, तुम मुक्त बनोगे सदा तभी ही,
योग–क्षेम वह वहन करेगा, जिसका ध्यान सदा करते हो,
आखिर क्यों इतना डरते हो?

शरीर नष्ट होता है इसमें की आत्मा नहीं। मैं यह शरीर नहीं, आत्मा हूँ अतः अमर हूँ। आत्मा के रूप में मैं तुम्हारे साथ ही क्या सबके साथ रहूँगा।

योगेश्वर भगवान श्री कृष्ण भी कहते हैं कि आत्मा को जो मरने वाला समझता है और जो इसे मरा समझता हैं वे दोनों ही नहीं जानते कि आत्मा असल में न तो किसी को मारता है और न कोई इसे मार ही सकता है :–

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं
यश्चैनं मन्यते हतं।
उभौ तो न विजानीतो
नायं हन्ति न हन्यते।

– श्रीमद्भगवदगीता अध्यायः 2 श्लोकः 19। कठोपनिष्द् में भी बिलकुल यही बात कहीं गई हैं, देखियेः–

हन्ताचेत्मन्यते हन्तुम
हन्ताचेत्मन्यते हतम्
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो
नायं हन्ति न हन्यते।। – कठोपनिषद् 1/2/19

आत्मा नाश रहित है नित्य है यह कभी पैदा नहीं होती। यह (मृत्यु के साथ) एक शरीर को छोड़ दूसरे शरीर में ऐसे जाती है जैसे कोई व्यक्ति फटे पुराने कपड़ों को त्याग कर दूसरे नये कपड़ों को पहनता है वैसे ही यह आत्मा पुराने जीर्ण हुए शरीर को त्याग कर नये शरीर को धारण करती है:–

वासंसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽ पराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही।।
– श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता; अध्याय: 2, श्लोक 22

जगद्गुरु अपने चिन्तित भक्त को अपने कथन 'अमर छा मरान' द्वारा संकेत देते हैं कि देखो मेरा यह शरीर अब बूढ़ा हो चला है।[2] मेरी आत्मा इसे त्याग देगी, इस से चिन्तत होने की बात नहीं। आत्मा किसी शस्त्र से कट नहीं सकती; आग इसे जला नहीं सकती, पानी इसे गला नहीं सकता, हवा इसे सुखा नहीं सकती क्योंकि आत्मा अच्छेद्य है, अदाह्य तथा अक्लेद्य है। यह नित्य, सर्वव्यापी, अचल तथा अमर है। यह अव्यक्त है, अचिन्त्य है, अविकारी है। इसके लिए दुखी होना तथा शोक करना बेमानी है। विनष्ट होने वाली काया के लिए भी शोक करना फ़जूल है। क्या हम पुराने जर–जर हुए उतारे हुए कपड़ों के लिए शोक करते हैं? यदि नष्ट होने वाले शरीर के लिए दुखी होना उचित नहीं, तो क्या अविनाशी आत्मा के लिए शोकग्रस्त होना उचित है? भगवान श्री कृष्ण भी यही कहते हैं:–

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि
नैनं दहति पावक:।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो
न शोषयति मारुतः ।।
अच्छेद्योयमदाह्योयं
अक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयम
अविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं
नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ।।

— श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता । अध्यायः 2, श्लोक 23, 24, 24

यही बात डॉ० "मधुरेश जी भी निम्न दोहे में बड़े सुन्दर ढंग से कहते हैं:—

जन्म हुआ जिस देहका, उसका अटल विनाश।
अमर आत्मा है सदा, यथा अमर आकाश।।

जगद्गुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी अमर आत्मा का ज़िक्र कर अपने उस भक्त को आत्मा के अमरत्व के विषय में अवगत कराते हैं। अपनी उस समय की शारीरिक अवस्था से रंच मात्र भी विचलित हुए बिना वे अपने इस भक्त को सच्चाई से साक्षात्कार कराते हैं। इस प्रकार भगवान जी एक सच्चे गुरु की भूमिका का निर्वाह करते है। सच्चा गुरु, किसी भी अवस्था में, भक्त के अज्ञान को दूर करने में काई कसर नहीं छोड़ते। डॉ० रामसेवक जी के शब्दों में:—

गुरु की महिमा अकथनीय है, शिष्यों में उत्साह भरे,
गुरु एक जीवनशिल्पी है, शिष्यों का अज्ञान हरे।
अनुभूति सत्य की जो करवाये सद्गुरु वही कहलाता है।
पुण्यवान व्यक्ति को उत्तम गुरु सुलभ हो जाता है।

श्री गुरु गीता के अनुसार 'गु' का मतलब अज्ञन तथा 'रु' का मतलब रूकावट है। आशय यह है कि गुरु अज्ञान को रोकने वाला होता है। 'गु' 'रु' के साथ जुड़ कर अज्ञान को दूर करने वाला बनता है:—

गुकारस्त्वन्धकारःस्याद्
रुकारस्तन्निरोधकः।
अन्धकारनिरोधित्वाद्
गुरुरित्याभिधीयते।।

गकारेणह्यकारस्य
योगिस्तिमिरवाचकः।
अन्धकार विनाशित्वाद्
गुरुरित्यभिधीयते।।

—श्रीगुरुगीता, प्रथम संस्करण, प्रकाशकः भगवान गोपीनाथ ट्रस्ट (कश्मीर); श्लोकः (10, 11)।

जगद्गुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी अमर आत्मा की ज़िक्र कर अपने (शोकविह्वल) भक्त के बहाने अपने सभी भक्तों को आत्मा के अमरत्व के बारे में बतला देते हैं और एक सच्चाई से पर्दा उठाते हैं। इस प्रकार वे (अपने जर्जर शरीर की) कोई परवाह न करते हुए एक सच्चे गुरु के कर्त्तव्य का निर्वहन करते हैं। वे आत्मा की अमरता के बहाने यह स्पष्ट सन्देश देते हैं कि इस शरीर के न रहने पर भी मैं रहूंगा और वैसे ही अपने भक्तों का मार्गदर्शन करता रहूंगा क्योंकि हम सब अमर आत्माएँ होने के नाते अमर हैं। हमारा शरीर चूंकि बदलता रहता है इसलिए हम (हमारा शरीर) जन्म, मरण, बुढ़ापा और बीमारियों से जूझते रहते है।

भगवान श्रीकृष्ण भी श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता के पन्द्रहवें अध्याय से सातवें श्लोक में कहते हैं:—

ममैवांशो जीवलोके
जीवभूतः सनातनः।
मनः षष्ठानींद्रियानि
प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति।।

— जीवात्मा के रूप में तुम अमर हो, तुम मेरा ही हिस्सा हो। कभी मृत्यु को प्राप्त नहीं होगे अतः तुम भी अमर हो। तुम नाहक इस भौतिक संसार में

सुखी रहने का प्रयत्न करते हो। जीवात्मा की अमरता एवं नित्यता के बारे में स्वामी शरनानन्द जी महाराज ने 'आत्मा'[3] का प्रयोग नहीं किया। उन्होंने 'मैं' को आत्मा का प्रतिरूप बता कर उसे नित्य, चैतन्य, अजर–अमर एव सनातन बताया है। इस सन्दर्भ में एक प्रसंग याद आ रहा है जो स्वामी जी महाराज ने स्वयं अपने श्रीमुख से कहा था। किसी ने उनसे पूछा कि 'महाराज, आपकी आयु कितनी हैं?' तपाक से स्वामी जी ने ठहाका लगा कर कहाः– 'जब से सृष्टि बनी तभी से मैं भी हूँ। तुम हिसाब लगा लो यही मेरी आयु है।' यह हास्यपूर्ण लगता है, किन्तु तात्विक तथ्य भी है।* वास्तव में देखा जाए तो 'मैं' अनादि अनन्त है। अनादि अनन्त क्या कभी मर सकता है? नहीं। अतः 'मैं' अमर है।

संसार भर के जीव जन्म से पहले बिना शरीर के थे, तथा शरीर त्यागने के बाद भी बिना शरीर के होंगे, ये (सब) बीच में ही शरीरधारी बने। मैं शरीर के जन्म लेने से पहले भी था। शरीर के न रहने पर भी मैं ही रहूंगा। इस पर दुखी होने की क्या बात है? 'मैं' (आत्मा) स्थाई है तथा शरीर अस्थाई है। अस्थाई वस्तु सदा न रहने वाली होती है यह एक अटल सत्य है। शरीर के न रहने पर यदि हम दुखी होंगे तो इससे बड़ी कोई मुर्खता नहीं। हाँ, शरीर एक माध्यम है, इस माध्यम का सांसारिक कर्त्तव्यों का निर्वहन करते हुए सही उपयोग हर समय करते रहना चाहिए। अपनी ज़िम्मेदारियों को निभाते हुए अपने स्वयं (अर्थात् मैं) की ज़िम्मेदारी को, संसार के चक्कर में पड़ते हुए, भूलना नहीं चाहिए। हमें अपना लक्ष्य पाने के लिए भगवान्नामस्मरण कहते रहना चाहिए। हमारा मानव शरीर पाने का मतलब ही मुक्ति पाना है। मुक्ति ही हमारा लक्ष्य है; नहीं तो हम न जाने कितने जन्मों तक आवागमन के चक्कर में फंसे रहेंगे। यह काया रहते हुए यदि हम जगन्नियन्ता का स्मरण करते रहेंगे तो मरण के समय भी, अभ्यास होने के कारण उनका नाम लेंगे। मरण के समय उनका नाम लेने से हमारी लक्ष्यपूर्ति होगी। जगद्गुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी ने भी स्वकर्मो द्वारा यही शिक्षा दी है।

शरीर त्याग करने से पहले भगवान जी समाधि में चले गये। समाधि से निकल कर उन्होंने पानी पीने की इच्छा प्रकट की। उन्हें पानी पिलाया गया। इसके पश्चात् (28 मई सन् 1968) पाँच बज कर पैंतालीस मिनट पर उन्होंने 'उों नमः शिवाय' मंत्र का उच्चारण किया, (उस समय जो वहां थे उन) भक्तों पर एक स्नेहसिक्त दृष्टि डाली, आँखें बन्द कीं और परमधाम सिधार गये। शरीरत्याग के समय भगवान का नाम लेने की महत्ता को स्वयं योगेश्वर भगवान श्रीकृष्ण ने श्रीमद्‌भगवद्‌गीता के आठवें अध्याय के तेरहवें श्लोक में इस प्रकार समझाया है:–

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म
व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन्।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं
सयाति परमां गतिम्।।

जो कोई 'उों' इस एक अक्षर–रूप ब्रह्म का उच्चारण करते हुए तथा इसके अर्थ स्वरूप ब्रह्म का चिन्तन करते हुए शरीर त्याग करता[4] है, वह परमगति (याने मुक्ति) को प्राप्त होता है।

भगवान जी के परमगति को प्राप्त होने के बाद भी इनके अनेक भक्तों ने अनेक बार उनकी उपस्थिति का एहसास किया है। यह भगवान जी के कथन 'अमर मरता है क्या?' की सच्चाई को बहुत ही शिद्दत के साथ प्रमाणित करता है कि शरीर नष्ट होता है आत्मा नहीं। आत्मा हिन्दू सद्‌ग्रन्थों तथा संत–महात्माओं की दृष्टि में ही एक पूर्ण सच्चाई नहीं अपितु अन्य धर्मों के सद्‌ग्रंथों एव साधु–सन्तों की नज़र में भी सच्चाई है। कोई इसे 'रूह' तथा कोई 'सोल' के नाम से जानता है।

प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या विज्ञान भी आत्मा की सच्चाई से परिचित हैं? क्या वैज्ञानिक आत्मा, सोल या रूह के अस्तित्व को मानते हैं? वैसे विज्ञान तब तक किसी सच्चाई को सच नहीं मानता जब तक उस सच्चाई को प्रयोग शालाओं में परखा नहीं जाता। वैज्ञानिकों ने कोई सच, किसी

कारणवश, यदि अभी तक परखा नहीं या परखने में असमर्थ रहे तो इसका तात्पर्य यह नहीं, उस सच का अस्तित्व ही नहीं है। हाँ, यह निस्संकोच कहा जा सकता है कि विज्ञान अभी उस स्तर तक नहीं पहुँचा है। कई विदेशी वैज्ञानिकों ने आत्मा से संबन्धित अनुसंधान किया है। इसका विवरण इरिका, साइमन द्वारा लिखित 'लाइफ आफटर डेथ' नामक पुस्तक के सन् 1999 के संस्करण के पृष्ट 63 पर 'माडर्न साइन्टिस्ट इन सर्च ऑफ सोल' शीर्षक के अन्तर्गत पढ़ा जा सकता है। केनेडा के एक विश्व प्रसिद्ध हॉर्ट सर्जन डॉक्टर विंडसर का मत है – 'मैं मानता हूँ कि शरीर में आत्मा होती है वह मृत्यु के समय शरीर से अलग होती है'। श्रीयुत ए०सी० भक्तवेदान्त स्वामी, डॉक्टर विलफ्रड जी० बिग्लो (Bigelo), अध्यक्ष, कॉर्डियो वेस्क्यूलर सरजरी यूनिट, टोरेन्टो जनरल हॉस्पिटेल, को आत्मा के बारे में एक पत्र में लिखते हैं:–

इसमें कोई सन्देह नहीं कि जीवित जीव के दिल में आत्मा की विद्यमानता है, और इसी में शरीर को बनाये रखने की सारी ऊर्जा विद्मान होती है। इसकी यह ऊर्जा पूरे शरीर में होती है और इसीको चेतना कहते हैं। अब रहा प्रश्न कि आत्मा कहाँ होती हैं तथा यह कहाँ से आती है? यह समझना कठिन नहीं। हमने यह पहले ही 'डिसकस' किया है कि आत्मा जीवों के दिलों में किस प्रकार रहती है और यह एक शरीर के मरनोपरान्त दूसरे शरीर में कैसे जाती है। आत्मा का आगमन परमात्मा से होता है।

उपरोक्त सब बातों का आशय है कि शरीर 'मैं' नहीं। 'मैं' आत्मा है, जो अमर है। यह अमर (आत्मा) कभी नष्ट नहीं होती। जगद्गुरु भगवान गोपीनाथ जी महाराज के कथन – 'अमर छा मरान' (अमर मरता है क्या?) का तात्पर्य भी यही है कि आत्मा कभी विनष्ट नहीं होती। आत्मा ही वास्तवकि है 'मैं' है।[5]

आलेख के उपसंहार के रूप में मैं एक प्रसिद्ध कवि डॉ० भानुदत्त त्रिपाठी 'मधुरेश' का निम्न दोहा उद्धृत करना चाहूँगा:–

जन्म हुआ जिस देह का, उसका अटल विनाश।
अमर आत्मा है सदा, यथा अमर आकाश।।
और–
यह शरीर सुन 'मैं' नहीं
'मैं' अमर आत्मा जान
रह जायेगा गात यह
निकलेंगे जब प्राण?
कर मत दुख इस देह का
है अनित्य यह मान
क्षण में खाक हो जायेगी
इसकी सारी शान।

Notes:

1. About a month and half before his giving up the gross body, a devotee was sore to see Bhagawaanji's physical condition and thought that he might give up his body. Bhagawaanji, divining his thoughts told him, 'Amar Chhaa Maran?' (Does what is immortal die?).

- Jagadguru Bhagawaan Gopinathji : By S.N. Fotedar, edited by Prof. J.N. Shrama, (second revised edition - 1991) page no. 45.

2. Shri S.N. Dhar recalls that a few days before Bhagawaanji gave up the physical frame he was at his place in the morning and found him physically very weak... He then remained in Samadhi till 5:30 p.m. when he asked for water, and was helped to drink about a tumbler of sugared water. At 5:45 p.m. he uttered 'Om namah Shivaya' in a low voice and looked around with infinite love towards those present. He then closed his eyes and all was over.

3. We are all individual souls, and we are eternal, but because our body's changing we are suffering birth, death, old age and disease.

- The Journey to Self Discovery, by : A.C. Bhaktavedanta Swami Prabhupada; fourth edition - 1996, page no. 2, 25, para 2.

4. Jagadguru Bhagawaan Gopinathji, : 2nd revised edition, page no. 47, 48, Publisher, Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust, Kharyar, Srinagar, Kashmir.

5. coming back, the science of reincarnation; based on the teachings of His Divine grace A.C. Bhaktavedanta Prabhupada, Swami, page nos. 43, 44, published by, the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Los Angeless, Stockholm, Sydney, HongKing, Mumbai.

*(देखें – श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताः मर्म और सन्देश (3); प्रथम संस्करण – 2013, पष्ठ' 1, संपादकः श्री दामोदर भगोरिया; प्रकाशकः गीता से जुडें, 13–एम०जी०डी० मार्केट, जयपुर 302002)

अमर छा मरान

– क्षमा कौल

अमर कभी मरता है क्या या अमर कभी नहीं मरता पगले / पगली। या आत्मा अमर है। यह इसका शाश्वत अनुवाद है। ये शब्द श्रुति माध्यम से भगवान जी (भगवान गोपीनाथ जी) उस क्षण बोले, जब उनकी भगिनी ने उन्हें प्रयाण–पथ पर देखा और अश्रुओं में विगलित हो गई।

स्वयं साक्षात् शिवस्वरूप भगवान और भला क्या कहते अपनी भगिनी को ढाढ़स बांधने अथवा वापस ज्ञान–चेतना में स्थित करने के लिए यों तो उनकी भगिनी भी ईश्वरत्व के नैकट्य के प्रसंग में असामान्य रही ही होंगी।

चूंकि मुझे इन शब्दों को उभारना एवं विश्लेषित करना है अतः मैं अत्यंत लघुता के बोध में सचमुच मौन एवं विस्मयसिक्त हूँ कि क्या लिखूं। भगवान के इन शब्दों की व्याख्या और मैं। भगवान श्री वासुदेव के शब्द! भगवान श्री गोपीनाथ के शब्द। सनातनत्व का सार।

आश्चर्य यही है कि इन शब्दों का आचरण व्यवहार में हमारी चेतना नहीं बन पाता; क्योंकि माया का प्रचण्ड है। किन्तु माया (शरीर) के सहयोग से ही ईश्वर के बारे में हमारी आत्मा मायावी संसार में माया से विरक्ति का पाठ जानती है। यही द्वन्द्व की बीज शक्ति है। यहीं दोनों में संघर्ष भी प्रारंभ होता है। भला माया जो मायेतर को आधार देती है, क्यों न अपना नाशवान मूल्य वसूले। समूचे जीवन का ही द्वन्द्व यही है। यथ्त प्रश्न है यही। यही देख देख चकित रहे धर्मराज युधिष्ठिर और वे चकित युधिष्ठिर हम सब में विद्यमान हैं तथा रहेंगे भी। माया की अपेक्षा संभव भी नहीं किंतु माया की अपेक्षा असंभव भी नहीं। इन दोनों संभव–असंभव स्थितियों के बीच प्रत्येक शरीरधारी झूलता ही रहता है चाहे कितना ही ज्ञानी क्यों न हो।

किन्तु ज्ञान के व्यवहारी परमात्मा के निकटवर्ती अथवा तद्स्वरूप इसके बारे में हर समय अपना एक सूत्र बोलते हैं कि मेरे समक्ष बैठे या मेरे भावी प्रिय भक्तों। जिज्ञासुओं! आर्तो। समझना है तो समझो। समझना चाहोगे तो समझोगे। जैसे वासुदेव कहते हैं हे अर्जुन! जो देख सकता है, वही देखता है। अथवा जिसे दिखाई देता है वही देखता है। अथवा जिसकी समझ में आता है वहीं समझता

/देखता / जानता है कि अमर नहीं मरता। अर्थात् मृत्यु माया/शरीर के आगे कोई अस्तित्व नहीं रखती। इसी प्रकार हर मनुष्य के लिए आत्मा का स्वरूप क्या है, यह बोध अथवा स्मरण स्वयं को बार–बार, बारम्बार हर क्षण देते रहना ही प्रार्थना का पर्याय है।

अतः अमर नहीं मरता/आत्मा नहीं मरती यह क्षण–क्षण स्वयं को स्मरण कराया जाए तो एक चैतन्य बनता है। इस भाव की सजगता भीतर जगती है। प्रार्थना बनती है। शाश्वत तत्त्व–चिंतन बनता है। चिंतन में मनन ईश्वरीय कृपा से धीरे धीरे घुलती है। मनुष्य लघु से ऊपर उठता है। स्वयं ही माया एवं मायेतर के द्वन्द्व में फंसे होने के तनाव से धीमे–धीमे मुक्ति पा–पा सहज होता है। विश्राम पाता है। उसे आनंद का निवास–स्थान पता चल जाता है या उसके संकेतक मिलते हैं। अमरता की चेतना–मृत्यु आपस में द्वन्द्वात्मक न हो कर मित्रात्मक हो जाते हैं, या हमारी दृष्टि उनके प्रति मित्रात्मक रहती है। इस मित्र–स्थिति पर सच्चे साधक (मनुष्य) स्थित होने पर उपरोपर की अवस्थाओं को निरंतर पार करते हैं। माया की पहचान का बोध तीव्र रखते हुए अपने भीतर एक एलर्ट घोषित करते हुए । स्वाभाविक है।

भगवान जी महान कोटि के शिवस्वरूप भक्त थे। वे द्वन्द्वात्मकताओं को पार कर चुके थे। वे हम माया के वशीभूतों के लिए हमारे बीच अवतरित हुए थे... वे भला और क्या कहते अपनी भगिनी को भाई को प्रयाणोन्मुख देख शोक–विह्वल पाकर। यही तो कहना था। यही तो शब्द थे।

किंतु उन्होंने ये शब्द हमारे लिए भी दोहराए जो क्षण में सुखी, क्षण में दुःखी होते हैं। जिनके यहां से क्षण–क्षण इस स्मृति का पारायण चलता रहता है कि वस्तुतः हम हैं कौन? हम आत्मा हैं। शाश्वत हैं। तथा अमर हैं। किंतु उस अमरता के सत्यत्व को देखते हुए भी वह अवलंब हमें विश्वास्य नहीं लगता। स्थूल माया का वैराटय् विश्वास्य लगता है। यही है सारा खेल। भगवान यही संदेश हमें बार बार देने के लिए आते हैं कि अमर छा मरान। अर्थात् अमर छुनु मरान या आत्मा छुनु मरान।

भगवान जी के इन शाश्वत शब्दों को चेतन में भर कर चैतन्य होना भक्त को संदेश भी है तथा सशक्त होने के लिए विचार भी।

हम अपने लघुत्व में जिस जिस क्षण यह मधुर और वास्तविक कल्पना करते हैं कि हम अंशीं के अंश वस्तुतः सनातन हैं, शाश्वत हैं; आदि से हैं, अनंत तक रहेंगे। उसके संग–संग, उसके अगल–बगल, तो यह विचार आश्वस्त तो करता है, मगर काव्य लगता है। हम अपने इंद्रियों के आवेग में लौट आते हैं, क्योंकि माया ने हमारा घरौंदा वही गढा है...। तब जाकर जब हम प्रश्नाकुल हो जाते हैं कि उस मनोरम, आत्मानुरागी यथार्थ काव्य में हमारा टिकना क्यों नहीं होता ? तो श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता हमें समाधान देती है किं हम ससीम हैं, परिभित हैं। उस अपरिमित अनुभव के लिए आवश्यक है कि भगवान की कृपा हो। तब कृपा शब्दों के अर्थों से बरसती है, और उस शब्द–ब्रह्मा के नितांत भीतरी संसार में जाना पड़ता है।

अर्थों का खुलना रहस्यलोक के द्वार का खुलना है। यह एक घटना होती है और उसी के साथ घटती है जिस पर उसकी कृपा हो। तभी श्रीकृष्ण अर्जुन से कहते हैं 'दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षु...'' कि तुम्हें अधिकतम पात्रता वाली आंखें दूंगा जिनमें यह क्षमता हो कि मेरे रूप के दर्शन का वहन कर सके। और यह दिव्य घटना घटित होना संभव हो। हमारी इंद्रियों में असीम ऊर्जा को धारण करने की पात्रता उसकी कृपा से ही संभव है। कृपा–केंद्रित चिंतन करने से ही चेतना में एक दिव्य स्फुरण होगा ... घटना घटेगी और हम मानना आरंभ करेंगे कि हम इंद्रियों के आवेगमयता का समुच्चय न होकर सतत, सनातन, निरंतर, दिव्य आत्मा हैं।

जब ऐसा होगा तब इंद्रियां तिरोहित होंगी और दिव्य चेतना जागृत होकर विराट को आत्मसात करेगी। कहीं भी हो रहे दिव्य स्फुरण को व्यक्ति अपनी चेतना (त्वचा) पर अनुभव करेगा और आत्मा का खिलता हुआ कमल दृष्टि–बद्ध रहेगा।

इस प्रकार यह जानकार भी कि हम अमर हैं, नहीं मरते, पर शारीरिक साकारता के विलुप्त होने में घबराते हैं। छोटे से और अल्पकालिक सत्य के सामने विराट सत्य की आहुति देते हैं। यही है तात्पर्य भगवान जी के इन सार शब्दों का।

ईश्वरीय विभूतियों ने ज्ञान–दर्शन को इस मनुष्य लोक में आकर बार–बार

दोहराया तथा समझाया है। चूंकि सृष्टि को माया अपने अधीन रख अधोगति में डालती है तभी तो विभूति योग का बखान होता है और जब जब धर्म की हानि होती है, 'मैं उत्पन्न होता हूँ' के ज्वलंत वाक्य ईश्वर कहते हैं। या व्यास कहते हैं, या भगवान गोपीनाथ जी कहते हैं।

ये ईष्वरीय विभूतियाँ सदा ही सूत्रों में बात करते हैं। यही इनकी संक्षिप्ति की कलात्मक विद्या है। इन सूत्रों की हज़ारों, लाखों बार, कोणो से तथा शब्दों में सुधी संसार व्याख्या करता रहता है। किंतु, सार बिंदु एक होता है कि आत्मा नित्य, शाश्वत और सनातन है। अतः ऐसी स्थिति उत्पन्न हो कि हम सत्य में आत्मा में रमें। नश्वर प्राय यंत्र में नहीं।

तभी भगवान जी अपने शरीर के महाप्रयाण के समय अपनी भगिनी के बहाने से अपने तत्कालीन तथा भविष्य के आगामी शिष्यों, भक्तों को यह संदेश देते हैं, कि अमरत्व वाली आत्मा को देखो। मैं वही हूँ। शिव वही है। सुंदर वही है। शरीर को न देखो। देखो, वहां से मैं प्रयाण करता हूँ... अब वह जड़ होकर व्यर्थ है। सार आत्मा की अमरता है।

ॐ नमः शिवाय।



Thus Spake Bhagawaan ji

- All that exist is God incarnate (viraat) and Om is its root. Om pervades everything. Nothing is possible without it.
- Meditating on Om means being wholly rid of the ego. only then is self realisation possible.
- One can realise the self by discretion.
- One's Own hard work and the Guru's grace are both very essential to God realisation.
- If after studying all the four vedas and the shastras, one does not act upon what one has gathered from them and is bereft of the Guru's grace, all one's study only exhausts and goes waste.
- He will boldly cross the ocean of maayaa who, though seemingly attached to the world, has given up all wordly desires and ambitions.
- Where is the way for spiritual advancement as long as there is lust?
- Think of Brahaman as a tree and sit on any one of its branches (representing Shiva, Naaraayana, etc.). The same goal will be reached in each case.
- It is an indication of God's grace if one surrenders at the feet of one's guru.
- "Amar Chhaa Maraan" - Does what's immortal die?

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